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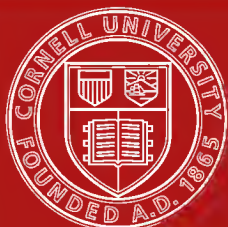
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THE GREAT INFANTA



ISABEL CLARA EUGENIA

ALONSO SANCHEZ COELLO

Prado Museum, Madrid

**THE
GREAT INFANTA
ISABEL**

SOVEREIGN OF THE NETHERLANDS

**BY
L. KLINGENSTEIN**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
EDWARD ARMSTRONG, M.A., F.B.A.**

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

**NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
LONDON: METHUEN & CO. LTD.**

1910

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INTRODUCTION

IT was the intention of the late Major Martin Hume to give to this volume as full an Introduction as that with which the sister book, "The First Governess of the Netherlands," was presented. I have felt it therefore my duty to my dead friend, the Editor, and to my late pupil, the Authoress, to act as usher to the Infanta Isabel in however makeshift a manner. It is not surprising that Major Hume included Philip II.'s daughter in the series of heroines of Romantic History, for he had an especial tenderness for Isabel and her sprightly younger sister Catherine, who became Duchess of Savoy. Nevertheless a captious critic might object that there was nothing which could be called romantic in Isabel's life. Her young-womanhood was passed in the seclusion of her prematurely ageing father's study. She never had, as far as is known, a sentimental love affair. Birthdays came and went until, as the Venetian envoy pathetically complained, she had lost the best years of her life, until, as she herself confessed, it was wiser to conceal than to celebrate their return. Then, when she was over thirty, she married a first cousin whom she had known for years, a somewhat pale and puny clergyman, for the Archduke Albert only laid aside his Cardinal's hat to play the bridegroom. With this husband she lived in "perfect and

unceasing union" for more than twenty years, and, when he died, she dismissed her pets—her dogs, her parrots and her monkeys—and was with difficulty prevented from cutting off her hair. Thenceforth she went decisively "to the good," in which direction her steps had always turned. Hers was a life of sorrow and nursing rather than of romance. She lost her mother when she was two, and her kindly step-mother died of influenza when she was fourteen. Her step-sister and one of her step-brothers, to whom she had played the little mother, died in childhood; since she was eighteen, she never again saw her cheerful playmate Catherine. Only too well known is the loathsome illness through which Isabel nursed her truly Spartan father, and the lingering gout which her husband bore with almost equal bravery tested her courage and her patience to the full.

If, however, there is little that is romantic in the vulgar sense in Isabel's history, there is no lack of sentiment of a higher type. She was herself *muy simpática*; she at once bestowed and attracted fellow-feeling. This quality, guided by her clear intellect and sound judgment, made her the embodiment of Sense and Sensibility. It is still quite easy to fall in love with her as she looks out from the two fine portraits by Coello at Madrid, in spite of the stiff brocade of the one, the heavy black folds of the other, and the throttling ruff of both. Power is visible in the broad forehead, the small well-moulded chin, in the firm, practical, somewhat large hand, which in both pictures is holding a laced handkerchief, but which was equally at home with a horse, a gun or a cross-bow. The attraction

lurks in the clear, kindly eyes, in the delicate oval of the rounded cheek, and above all in the mouth. This latter was the subject of comment in her babyhood. Forquevaux, the French Ambassador, assured the grandmother, Catherine de' Medici, that the child had not her father's Habsburg mouth, though it was just a little large. The lips are indeed rather long, and there is the pretty smiling pout of the lower lip which characterises all the pictures of her great-great-aunt, Margaret of Austria, though in Isabel the bee-sting is less pronounced. Each corner of the mouth just turns up with a little humorous twist, and it is that which betrays Isabel's sense of fun, of which neither her troubles nor her devotional exercises ever robbed her.

In a rare engraving of Isabel, when she was sixty-five or sixty-six, the rounded cheeks have sunk, and the little chin has become prominent, but the eyes are as open and clear as ever, and the eyebrows as finely pencilled, while the long lips still turn up as if in the act to laugh. Her beauty was in fact of the style that keeps. Bentivoglio, writing when she was forty-six, describes the consummate grace of every movement, the splendour of her eyes, the mingled kindliness and majesty in her bearing, which irresistibly drew all hearts towards her.

There are two series of correspondence which bring Isabel very close to the reader of modern days. The one contains the letters of Philip II. from Portugal to his two daughters, the other her own intimate letters from the Netherlands to her brother's minister and personal friend, the Duke of Lerma. It is true that Philip's correspondence is one-sided, for the girls' replies are not preserved. Yet from these letters, as tender as

any that royal father ever wrote, we know exactly the tastes, the daily habits, the intelligent curiosity, almost the very character of the girls of fifteen and fourteen. They send him peaches in a box, but they arrive in such a condition that he would not have known what they were, if they had not told him. He returns the compliments with bergamots, or asks their opinion of a huge lime, which is said to be a sweet one, adding that the small lemon which accompanies it is only to fill the box. A little bird, of which the girls write, cannot be, as they think, a heron, because this is big, and their bird is very small. Bouquets of orange blossom, roses and violets are brought him every day, but no jonquils, which he thinks cannot grow in Portugal. So the daughters send him the first jonquil from his well-loved Aranjuez, but he thinks that it must be a wild and not a garden species. He misses the nightingales which they are hearing, and expresses pleasure at their news that four foxes have been shot. The comic character of the little play is the old servant Maddalena, whose sea-sickness and recurrent tantrums he knows will amuse his daughters. The tantrums he unkindly ascribes to a taste for wine, and when Maddalena is really ill he reports that her colour is unhealthy, and that she has a distaste for wine, which for her is a very bad sign. The taffetas gown in which poor Maddalena has to receive the Empress is somewhat worn, but this Philip confesses is a little his fault, because she has often asked him for a new one. Another faithful servant sends his daughters such interminable messages that he cannot repeat them, but they must be careful not to tell him so. Isabel is constantly encouraged in her motherly duties towards her little

brother, whom she teaches to draw and to write : if her young Austrian cousin speaks such bad Spanish as she says, Isabel must try and improve it. If again the cousin in her shoes is not as tall as Isabel in her stockings, it is not because the latter is so big but because the cousin is so small. As a matter of fact Isabel was above average height. So goes this correspondence, to which Miss Klingenstein does ample justice, but which even in an Introduction cannot be passed over, because nothing else can so illuminate the relations between the daughter and the father to whom alone she owed the formation of her character.

From Philip II.'s return from Portugal in 1582 until his death in 1598 there is little detailed information of Isabel. We only know that she was his constant companion and adviser, but if he always took her advice it must often have been very bad. Philip, however, like his great-grandfather, Maximilian, was more prone to ask advice than to act thereon.

To this middle period belongs a warm-hearted letter to Isabel from Catherine de' Medici, written moreover in the year 1584 when the French Queen-mother's troubles were at their height. She hopes that her grand-daughter is not forgetting her, for she always held her in her heart in the same affection as that with which she loved the girl's mother—"a daughter so good and so dear that I wish for those that she has left all the happiness and contentment and good fortune that I wished for her. You are only two, and also there is only left to you of hers your old grandmother, whom you make live again every time that I have good news of you, and if I only had the pleasure of being able to see you, it would be one of the

greatest joys that could be received by her who prays our Lord God to give you His grace and bestow upon you all that you desire, and I beg you to give my affectionate regards to the King, your father. *Vostre bonne grent mere, Caterine.*" This, it must be confessed, was a kindly letter from an extremely busy and most harassed old lady to a grand-daughter whom she had never seen.

It was in this same year, 1584, that Matteo Zane, the Venetian envoy, wrote in his report to the Senate that Isabel spent several hours a day in helping her father with his letters, and that he loved her more than all his other children. In her was centred, he continues, all the affections of the Spanish people, who longed for her succession, which, in view of her only brother's health, seemed very probable ; her piety, her force of character, and her good sense, rendered her indeed more worthy of the throne. If Isabel had, in fact, replaced her degenerate, feckless brother, Philip III., the decline of Spain might have been long delayed.

The second series of correspondence opens with Isabel's letters from the Netherlands, in 1599, and closes in 1611, though there are a few of later date, down to 1632. They are addressed for the most part to the Duke of Lerma, but a few, and among these one of the very best, are written to her brother, the King of Spain, while the last was sent to her nephew, Philip IV. As a prelude should be read Isabel's description of her journey across the Alps by the St Gotthard Pass, and down the Rhine to the Netherlands. This may well take rank with the best of the many good travellers' tales of this period. The writer's natural girlish curiosity peeps out in her father's letters from Portugal, and

now, as a woman, and a trained observer, she can for the first time in her life give it full scope. Her interest is as fresh as ever, and each novel experience delights her; she revels in the flowers, the birds and animals that are new to her, she is amused by the quaint hospitality of the Swiss; she notices the three little icy lakes at the summit of the pass, and has agreeable thrills of terror as she crosses the Devil's Bridge at Andermatt—the Hell Bridge, as she calls it—and hears the stories of men and horses blown into the stream by the violent up-draught from the valley. Altdorf she thinks the prettiest place for its size that she has ever seen; she pictures the little villages that stud the banks of Lake Lucerne, with their patches of level garden ground, and no exit nor entrance save by the lake; she has all a child's pleasure in picnicking on the rocks, and arrives at Lucerne wet through and in the highest spirits.

Zealous Catholic as she was, Isabel speaks in kindly terms of the heretics among whom she had to lodge on her way to Bâle, though in Bernese territory she was not allowed to hear Mass, and to fulfil her religious duties had to shut all the doors and windows of her lodgings. In Lorraine and the southernmost provinces of the Netherlands the new experiences are those of society rather than of nature; she cannot contain her mirth at the court ladies' farthingales, and prides herself on escaping from being kissed after the French fashion. At Namur she was entertained by a battle of two parties of men on stilts, and could not help shrieks of laughter, as she saw them topple over each other and over the spectators; it was better fun than any bull-fight. Thus Isabel rattled on with her tale, until, after describing

the formal entry into Brussels, she concludes—"the flaws in this report may readily be pardoned, for when a person has gone through so many lands, it is not surprising if the memory is at fault."

The characteristic of Isabel's letters is their extreme naturalness, which makes them peculiarly modern, and the touches of humour which enliven them even when the political prospect is most gloomy. Her main topic, of course, consists of the fortunes of war and the prospects of peace, but she continues to take the liveliest interest in all the births, deaths, and marriages of her old Spanish circle, and her correspondent, the Duke of Lerma, evidently supplied her with gossip in abundance—"Your matrimonial news is capital," she writes, "and I fancy that the ladies must have smashed the devil's eye, as such a lot of them are marrying." Though she never neglected her duty in the capital, the simple country life with its shooting and riding was what she really loved. "The life of the country is the best of all, and I believe that you will be of my opinion." This life she enjoyed to the full in her hunting-box at Marimont, though quarters were somewhat close, and in the one chamber which she could spare her ladies, they used to change the position of their beds every day, to see if they could find more room to dress.

From Marimont, Isabel wrote her excellent hunting letter to her brother, full of jokes at her own expense. Wishing to show her skill with the crossbow to the Duke of Aumale, who was her visitor, she twice shot at a stag, and twice the cord snapped, and there were no more cords nor crossbows to be had for days. At last they came, and after a blank day she vowed that she would

not go home until she had killed. Through the thick brushwood she pushed her way, and just at eventide she came upon two beautiful stags, and shot at one, which was not eight paces off, and so unconscious of her presence that it went on feeding, "but I missed him most beautifully, I believe from pure greediness." Her next attempt was yet more annoying. She had an easy shot at a stag and thought that she had hit him hard; away he went, and the huntsman cried that he was falling. They searched for him for two whole days, and on the third morning a huntsman cried to his fellows—there it is, there it is! They ran up with joy, and there they found—not the stag, but the shaft stuck so tight in the tree that it had to be cut down to get it out, so the stag had got off safe and sound.—"I don't believe," she wrote, "that anybody ever made two such bad shots." It was not, however, always human skill that was at fault, for one day a doe ran from end to end of the net, and was never hit. "I think it must have been some sort of witch, for there are plenty here."

Isabel was, as has been seen, not herself the subject of romance, but she was brought into unpleasantly close contact with one of the most noted romances of all the century. The Prince of Condé, trying to save his beautiful but giddy young wife from the lust of the disreputable old Henri Quatre, took refuge at the Archdukes' Court. Nobly enough they refused to give her up, though the King threatened them with war, which must have been their ruin; and war there would have been but for his assassin's well-aimed knife. Never under cover of great national schemes was there a more disgraceful threat of war, but in spite of the imminent peril Isabel

never lost sight of the humorous and pathetic sides of her unwelcome hospitality: "I should have a good laugh over it all," she wrote to Lerma, "if I could only trust my pen." And to her brother, "She is such a perfect Celestina, that if they wanted to make a portrait, they could not paint her more exactly: and when I think of the figure that her *galant* cuts, it is impossible to stop laughing for all the war that he wants to make upon us." Meanwhile the Archduchess did all in her power to win the affections of the flighty little princess, and to bring her to a better mind, but all in vain, for everything that did not relate to her elderly lover was poison to her—"She is completely won for him, or I should better call her lost: I have the greatest pity for her, for she is the prettiest and gentlest creature in the world."

The tragedy at Paris was productive of pure comedy at Brussels, where Condé had now arrived. He refused to see his wife, but was always lying in wait to catch a glimpse of her out of the back of his head, in Isabel's phrase. She too, with all her disdain and abusive words, went spying for him from window to window, so that their eyes were always following each other. Condé really loved his girl-wife, but his relations were persuading him to put her away and marry one of the French princesses. When he came to take his leave of Isabel he asked that his wife might not be present, but, behold! there she was at the door, dressed and with her hair done in Spanish fashion, as pretty as gold, for it suited her extremely well. Both husband and wife were much upset, and then the former went to see the garden, and the princess after him. At last he spied her in an alley and made her three low bows. There was no

getting him out of the garden, until up came one of his cousins who used bad language, and she was left in tears. This was really the reconciliation, for three days later her sister came to take her away, safe and sound, and she shed as many tears at leaving her kind hostess as she had shed on entering her palace. "I have given her a good preaching," Isabel wrote, "since, as she has been here, I want to do something to improve her, for her youth and bad advisers must excuse the past. She has promised that I shall hear how she behaves, and that there shall be no more ground for talk about her. Pray God it may be so, for she is so easily led that the company in which she is will always draw her with it."

This tale, so well known in its wider aspects, has been, perhaps, worth telling at some length, because it shows the several sides of Isabel's character, because it proves her to be no mere historical abstraction, the puppet of courtly panegyric, but a warm, living woman, richly endowed with honour, sympathy and humour. True religious feeling is always a friend, and not a foe, to humour. To the very end there was never a breath of cant in Isabel's correspondence, in spite of her notorious piety and her Franciscan robes. Her very last letter, written a year before she died, contains its jest and its liberal breadth of view. Philip IV. was sending his brother, the Cardinal Infant Ferdinand, to the Netherlands, and Isabel wrote,—“I have to beg one thing of your Majesty, and I believe that you will laugh at it; nevertheless I am begging quite in earnest, and without knowing the Infant's wish, for I imagine that, as he belongs to our house, he must be the first to become a

cleric of his own free will, and so I believe he will suit his office. But my request is that your Majesty order him to leave his robes behind, for Cardinals are very ill received here, and so he would be very well received without them : moreover wide skirts are very embarrassing for war or for anything else."

My aim so far has been to give some preliminary idea of the personality of Miss Klingenstein's heroine. Not much need be said by way of preface to her political career in the Netherlands. Philip II. had had designs on the throne of England for his favourite daughter, and he had definitely claimed for her that of France, for was she not the heiress of the Valois, and was not the Salic Law a mere forgery or fiction of the lawyers? But when the old King lay dying, he wished to leave his kingdom at peace with France, and to close the running sore which the effort to retain the Netherlands had inflicted upon Spain. With this latter view, he gave the still faithful provinces at least a nominal independence under Isabel and her husband, the Archduke Albert. The project in itself was not unwise. Charles V. had again and again contemplated the formation of an independent Burgundian state, ruled by an Infanta with a French prince as husband. There was now no French prince in the market, but on the other hand the provinces themselves had more than once looked to a revival of their connection with the Empire, and the nobles had actually invited the Archduke Matthias to be their governor. Had Philip formed his resolution even a few years earlier, when Parma was at the height of his success, it is just possible that the Northern and Southern provinces might have once more been reunited.

But while Charles V., to use his favourite phrase, "enjoyed the benefits of time," his son abused them, and thus, when the Archdukes made friendly overtures to the insurgents, they were not even vouchsafed the answer, "Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now."

In the Southern provinces, Philip's experiment was by no means a complete failure, and, such success as there was, was due, apart from the military genius of Spinola, to the personal qualities of Isabel. Albert was a most conscientious ruler, pure and moderate, just and brave; but he was slow and irresolute, stiff and punctilious, whereas the circumstances of the Netherlands and the character of the people demanded prompt decision and friendly intercourse. This latter at all events Isabel gave them. When asked as a child of what nationality she was, she replied French and Spanish. No answer could have been more apt. The Netherlanders were delighted with the Spanish dignity, which gave distinction to their Court, and with the natural friendliness, the gift of the best of the Valois or perhaps the Medici. During the years of the truce, after 1609, Cardinal Bentivoglio was probably right in his opinion that the Court of Brussels was the pleasantest in all Europe. It is true that Isabel's ladies-in-waiting, unlike those of her grandmother Catherine or her aunt Margaret, might be mistaken for nuns, but this was merely a matter of morals, and there was no lack of life and fun, for Isabel entered eagerly into all the amusements of her adopted people, and brought down the popinjay amid the enthusiasm of the crowd.

The Archdukes may well be regarded as the parents of the modern, zealous Belgian Catholicism. When they

arrived they found Churches destroyed, and religious houses broken up by the natural results of years of war, and especially by the fanatical raids of the Flemish sectaries. Under their care grew up a well-ordered Church with an excellent Episcopate, a highly-educated and hard-working clergy. Heresy lingered on in its old strongholds, Antwerp and Ghent, but its original *raison d'être* was gone, and Catholicism reigned supreme in the Walloon provinces, from which the iconoclastic outbreak, which had ushered in civil and religious war, had started. So also the revival of Belgian art, the School of Rubens, Van Dyck, and Breughel, is due to the Archdukes. It is true enough that trade had died, that the teeming manufacturing cities had become country towns with purely local industries, that there was no outlet for their commerce, since the closing of the Scheldt had choked the throat of Antwerp. The Belgium of the Archdukes was an old-fashioned, perhaps rather slumberous country; it had none of the eager commercial life, and not very much of the intellectual enlightenment which were enlivening the Northern provinces. But at least the Southerners were guiltless of the cruel factions of Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants, and the treatment of the traitors, whose treason clouded Isabel's last year, was far more humane than that accorded to the faithful Dutch patriot Olden-Barneveldt by his fellow-citizens.

Even on the military side the Southern provinces have reason to be proud of the record of the Archdukes' reign, if it be remembered that, notwithstanding the peace, their northern rivals were liberally supplied with English and French resources. Ostend and Breda were

a fair set off to the loss of Bois-le-Duc and Maestricht, although the glory was mainly due to Spinola and his Spanish and Italian veterans, yet the rulers had succeeded in inspiring a military spirit into their own people. It was not for nothing that Isabel harangued her troops from horseback, when Maurice was on her frontiers, nor that she tended the sick and wounded before Ostend. Madame, mother of the Regent Orleans, used to say that the rule of women might be good enough for England, but that Frenchmen required a man. The Netherlands must rank with England, for three of their ablest rulers have been women. Isabel makes a noble third to Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary, and if Margaret of Parma had no particular capacity save for riding to hounds, she at least gave the Netherlands their greatest soldier in her son. Lest arguments with pregnant consequences be founded on this feminine pre-eminence, it is wise to add that on each occasion the sole electors of these paragons were men. One sad coincidence there is in the lives of the three great rulers: neither Margaret of Austria, nor Mary nor Isabel left a child. In her letters Isabel always writes of her little niece, Anna, as her daughter-in-law, for there was a contract that her eldest son should marry an Infanta, and that they should jointly succeed to her inheritance. In spite of prayer and pilgrimage the baby boy was never granted her. Had Providence been more kind, the modern Belgian kingdom might have been by two centuries forestalled.

E. ARMSTRONG

THE GREAT INFANTA

ISABEL, SOVEREIGN OF THE NETHERLANDS

CHAPTER I

ELIZABETH OF THE PEACE

Condition of Europe in 1559—The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis—The settlement of Europe—Marriage of Philip II. of Spain and Elizabeth of France—Elizabeth's life in Spain—Her relations with Philip—The birth of the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia—Proposed departure of Philip for the Netherlands—Condition of the Netherlands—The rule of Alba—The death of Don Carlos—The death of Queen Elizabeth—Philip's fourth marriage—The childhood of the Infanta Isabel and her sister Catherine—Philip's affection for Isabel

THE year 1559 witnessed a great change in the aspect of Europe. From the opening of the century, with rare intervals, the two great Catholic powers, the Habsburg and the Valois, had been warring against each other. Now a common necessity was urging them to peace; more, they bound themselves to ally in opposition to a danger which threatened both, the heresy which was springing up in Europe. For in the Netherlands the reformed doctrines were gaining ground; in France a strongly militant Calvinism counted among its adherents such men as the Admiral Coligny and his brother D'Andelot and

some members of the princely house of Bourbon ; while in Scotland, of which the Dauphiness of France, Mary Stuart, was queen, the uncompromising John Knox urged the Lords of the Congregation against the Queen - Regent. Worst of all, Mary Tudor, under whom England had been united to the Church of Rome, had just died, and in her stead the heretic Elizabeth reigned, usurping, in the eyes of Catholic Europe, the rights of her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. Only a strong alliance between the two great houses of continental Europe could render her powerless for harm. This alliance was to be cemented by marriage treaties. Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry II. of France and Catherine de' Medici, should wed Don Carlos, the heir to the Spanish dominions ; while the Princess Margaret of Valois, Henry II.'s sister, became the wife of Emanuel Philibert, the Duke of Savoy, whose territory, astride the Alps, made him a personage of equal importance to the King of France on one frontier and the Spanish ruler of Milan on the other. As for Philip II. of Spain, by the death of Mary of England a widower for the second time, he for a short while cherished the hope of bringing back England to Rome through a marriage with Elizabeth Tudor. But she, after a few months' coquetry, convinced him of the hopelessness of his project. Finding himself thus a free man, he determined to "cut the grass from under his son's feet," to wed Elizabeth of Valois, Carlos' destined bride. Catherine de' Medici was nothing loath ; her daughter could exercise greater influence for the good of France, as Queen of Spain, than as the wife of the heir-apparent. The last point decided in the treaty, which was signed on April 2, 1559, at Cateau-

Cambr sis, was that Philip II. should marry Elizabeth of France.¹

Thus it came about that in the winter of 1559, Elizabeth, whom the warrior Duke of Alba had already married in his master's name, was making her way through the snows of the Pyrenees, accompanied by a vast train of nobles and ladies, to meet as her husband the most powerful monarch in Europe. Many cold January days were passed in the little monastery of Roncesvaux, on the southern slope of the Pyrenees, while Frenchmen and Spaniards were bickering as to the place at which the Queen should be handed over to her husband's envoys. So bad were still the relations between the two nations that the King of Navarre, the head of the French escort, was unwilling to enter Spanish territory. On the other side, the Cardinal Archbishop of Burgos and the Duke of Infantado, the Spanish envoys, though at Epinal, no greater distance than from Paris to St Denis, insisted on being met half-way, regardless of the fact that the ceremony of handing over the Queen would then have to take place in the open country in the bitter cold.² Finally the Spaniards were induced to give way by the threat that the Frenchmen, driven by hunger from Roncesvaux, would descend upon Epinal, where the Spanish train would be obliged to surrender their lodgings to their young Queen.

The threat caused the Archbishop and the Duke to hasten their steps ; and in the little mountain monastery the ceremony was performed. The Queen tearfully

¹ "C. M. H.," II. ch. iii. p. 93-4.

² Brant me, "Vies des Dames illustres," 4me discours, and Martin Hume, "Queens of Old Spain."

bade farewell to her cousin, the King of Navarre, and, surrounded by a retinue of strangers, she entered her new kingdom.

Writers of romance have united in bewailing the fate of the girl-queen, and in imagining a hopeless love for her lost betrothed, Don Carlos. But only at first did the King seem the less desirable. Carlos was indeed her match in nothing but age. A pretty, high-spirited girl of fourteen, accustomed to the flattery and gaiety of the French court, how would she have fared united to a sickly, epileptic boy, already subject to violent fits of passion, when he was beyond all means of control? Instead, she became the wife of Philip, then a man of thirty-two, to all appearances stern, cold, incapable of affection. So he appeared to Elizabeth at their meeting at Guadalajara, where, not going a step beyond the distance prescribed by strict etiquette, he awaited his bride.¹ The poor child gazed at the cold face in speechless terror; and the King, in irritation, asked whether she was anxious to see if he had white hair.

In other respects the meeting can hardly have been reassuring. Over Elizabeth's room door were written the words, "Forget thy people and the house of thy fathers, and the King will delight in thy charms;"² rather a sad exhortation for a girl in a strange country.

The marriage of the King and Queen was solemnised at Toledo on 2nd February. As the Cortes of Castile were still assembled there, Philip took the opportunity to make known that his marriage did not exclude his son Carlos, the son of his first marriage with his cousin Maria of Portugal, from the succession; and the Estates

¹ Brantôme.

² Forneron, i. p. 219, "Philip II."

were bidden to take the oath to him as heir to the throne.¹

The fear with which Elizabeth's first meeting with Philip had inspired her was soon dispelled. She was young and gay, and her charm, in Spain as in France, won all hearts. Already the gallant Spanish gentlemen were saying that they dared not look at her, lest her black eyes and locks should kindle a passion, and fill the King with jealousy. The people throughout her life bestowed a love amounting almost to worship on their Queen "of the Peace and of Goodness."²

As for Philip, his girl-wife awoke in him an affection which was only surpassed, in after years, by his great love for their daughter, Isabel. Though the Queen appears never to have been admitted, as Isabel was later, to a share in his affairs of state, yet, in domestic matters, the relations of the King and Queen grew ever more intimate. It has been suggested that Elizabeth's letters to France were so jealously superintended by her husband that no word of sorrow or complaint could have reached her mother. It may be so; but that the Queen should be able to fulfil the mission which her mother had confided to her, of enlisting Philip's sympathy for France, it was necessary that Catherine de' Medici should know the truth of her daughter's relations with her husband. The letters of the Queen's ladies appear to have been quite frank. They declare that her Majesty has in the King a devoted lover. Elizabeth herself writes, that but for her husband she would find "*ce lieu l'un des plus fâcheux du monde*," owing to the monotony of existence; but were it a hundred times more wearying, her happiness with

¹ Du Prat, p. 119, "*Vie d'Elizabeth de Valois*."

² Brantôme.

Philip would still outweigh all sorrow that it might cause her.¹

The Queen had already once been disappointed in her hopes of motherhood, but, on August 12th, 1566, at the summer palace at El Bosque de Segovia, in the Sierra de Guadarrama, to the north of Madrid, she gave birth to a daughter.

Philip remained at his wife's side, cheering and comforting her, assuring her that he was as happy to have a daughter as a son. So he told his courtiers, when he went into the chapel to give thanks for the birth of the child; and indeed, as he sorrowfully said, had he not cause to prefer a daughter to a son like the Prince, Don Carlos?² Within a few days the French ambassador, who had been taken to see the child, described her to her grandmother as marvellously fat and blonde, "*fort belle, le front large, le nez un peu grand, comme celluy du père, dont elle ne ressemble de la bouche encore qu'on la trouve un peu grandette*"³—surely a sufficiently distinctive description of an infant some four days old. The ambassador sums it up by declaring that the features and skin gave promise of "*une grande beauté et blancheur*"; and he adds that the Spaniards have already assigned the Infanta a husband, the Archduke Rudolf, the eldest son of the Emperor Maximilian II., a youth who was at the time being educated at the Court of Philip II., his uncle.

A curious incident, which nearly proved fatal to the Infanta in the first hours of her life, illustrates the rigour of Court etiquette. The Queen had omitted to

¹ Du Prat.

² Letter to Alba in Brussels (Documentos Escogidos del Archivo de la Casa de Alba).

³ Forquevaux (Gachard, Bibliothèque nationale à Paris).



ELIZABETH DE VALOIS, QUEEN OF SPAIN

COELLO

Collection of J. Spiridon Paris

appoint a nurse from the many applicants for that honour. Each was required to prove by an elaborate pedigree that she was free from the taint of Jewish or Moorish blood. Inquiries on this point, and also with regard to the orthodoxy of the family and the personal reputation of the three ladies primarily selected, were not complete when the child was born. None ventured to give any command; and until the King could be approached, the physicians consulted, and the lady required sent for, the infant pined and appeared to be in a dying condition. But by August 25th, all danger seeming over, she was baptized in the royal chapel at Segovia, by the Papal Nuncio, the Archbishop of Rossano.¹ The ceremony was splendid, but without the great magnificence lavished, at a later period, upon the many short-lived infants of Philip IV. The King himself, whom etiquette forbade to be present, watched the ceremony from a secret window; the child's god-parents being her half-brother Carlos, and her aunt, the Princess Juana of Portugal. In spite of some discussion and jealousy, she was held at the font, and carried back to her mother's room, not by Don Carlos, but by her father's young half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, in a few years to win fame for himself as the victor of Lepanto. The reason for this substitution was, according to the ambassador, the fact that Don Carlos' sole strength lay in his teeth; and the ambassador's tone implies a prayer that his jealousy of Don Juan may not lead him to give further evidence of his one power.²

The Infanta received the names of Isabel Clara Eugenia:

¹ Freer, "Elizabeth de Valois," vol. II.

² Gachard. Forquevaux's correspondence in La Bibliothèque nationale à Paris, II., among Collection de Chroniques belges.

Isabel, in memory of Isabel the Catholic, Philip's great-grandmother ; Clara, as she was born on St Clara's Day ; Eugenia, in accordance with a vow made by the Queen some months before, when, near Madrid, she had encountered a procession. The body of Saint Eugen was being brought from St Denis, as a present from her brother Charles IX. to the metropolitan church of Toledo ; and Elizabeth had entreated the saint's intercession that she might bear a child.

During the weeks which followed the birth of the Infanta, Philip was preparing plans for his departure to the Netherlands. The Queen was to accompany him, as soon as she was able to travel. Don Carlos, to his great disappointment, was to remain ; though, for the present, it was assumed that he would be regent in his father's absence, and there was little thought of the disgrace awaiting him.

Philip had been invested with the sovereignty of the Netherlands in 1555, a few months before his father had transferred to him the Crowns of Spain. Dramatic as was the scene, so often described, of Charles V.'s resignation of his authority in favour of his son, it was but the prelude of one of the most stirring dramas which the world has ever witnessed. The ceremony itself might well cause uneasiness to those accustomed to look below the surface. The Emperor Charles, born in the Netherlands, always a Fleming at heart, took leave of his people, leaning on the shoulder of William the Silent, the Prince of Orange, the head of the most powerful noble house in the Netherlands. He resigned his authority to his son Philip, whose heart had always been, and remained to the end, in Spain ; who, unable to speak to his subjects in their own

tongue, had perforce to address them through his deputy, Granvelle, Bishop of Arras. Philip had no understanding of his Flemish people. Unlike his father, who was ever happiest among them, he made his visits of the shortest duration possible; and in 1559 he left the provinces never to return. He left as his representative his aunt, Margaret, the Duchess of Parma, who, with the title of Governess, ruled in his name.

From the time of Philip's departure, difficulties began to gather. The unpopularity of Granvelle, the chief of the council of Spanish advisers with whom the Governess ruled, combined with the opposition roused by the King of Spain's revival of his father's "Placards," or edicts against heresy, placed the government in an extraordinarily critical position. At the moment, when great caution was called for, Philip, against the advice of the Governess Margaret and of Granvelle, introduced a wise, but exceedingly inopportune measure. In 1555 there were but three dioceses in the whole of the Netherlands, a considerable portion of the country being under the jurisdiction of foreign prelates and thus liable to much foreign pressure. Philip, following a plan conceived early in Charles V.'s reign, and very popular at the time, proposed that there should be fourteen new bishoprics, with three archbishoprics. The suggested innovation raised a howl of execration alike from nobles, clergy, and people, who each had their own reasons for resenting it. The new bishoprics were to be endowed by the incorporation of the rich abbey lands, up till then the appanages of the noblest families for their younger sons. The clergy feared the inquiry into their moral condition, which was sure to result from a reformed episcopate. The people

saw in the instructions to the new canons an attempt to establish the Inquisition; and the nobility themselves, from very laxity, were generally inclined towards toleration. Therefore, with the Prince of Orange, the Counts Egmont and Horn at their head, they expressed their protest by refusing to take any part in public affairs, and for the first time found a common ground with the lower classes in opposition to the new ecclesiastical régime. By 1566 the nationalists had obtained the recall of Granvelle; and began a serious agitation against the Placards, and for the summons of the Estates-General, both of which Philip, from the seclusion of Segovia, refused. He had appointed Alba his lieutenant, and now announced that, after all, he would not visit the Netherlands in person, and Alba departed alone. Soon came accounts of his iron rule, of the stamping out of rebellion by a reign of terror, of the arrest of Egmont and Horn, to be followed by the imprisonment of the Flemish nobles Montigny and Berghen in Spain, whither they had come with a petition to the King. These troubles could not fail to cast a shadow over the last years of the young Queen Elizabeth. In vain she added her tears and entreaties to those of the mother and the wife of Egmont and Horn. Philip was inflexible, and his sternness filled up the measure of grief caused by the arrest and death of Prince Carlos. Though his death brought her own children nearer to the throne, the gentle Queen bemoaned his fate, until sternly ordered to check her tears.

During the first months of the Infanta's life, the Queen had obtained from the King permission to have the sole care of the child, to bring her up as a Frenchwoman. In after years her French panegyrist loved

to declare that she was as good a Frenchwoman as her sister, the Duchess of Savoy, was a Spaniard ; and that she used all her influence with the King, her father, to help any Frenchmen whom she knew to be oppressed by Spaniards. He relates how the Infanta, visiting the galleys at Lisbon, and seeing some Frenchmen in chains there, freed them to the number of six score, and gave them the wherewithal to return to France.¹

Isabel was two years old when her mother died. In the summer of 1568 hopes were again entertained that at length a worthy heir might be born to Philip. But the Queen, who had been ailing for some time, grew rapidly weaker, the physicians mistook the symptoms of her disease, and on October 3rd she died, the victim of their unskilful treatment. On the morning of her death, before daybreak, Philip was with her ;² and their farewell was "enough to break the heart of so fond a husband," as Philip was to her. She commended her children to his care, grieving that she could not see them, but she could not but be thankful that she was leaving them in good hands. "I am comforted," she wrote in her last days to the Duchess of Alba, her chief waiting-woman, "I am comforted by the knowledge that they are in your hands ; and I pray that God in His mercy may suffer them to remain thus until they marry."³

Great as was Philip's grief, he had scarcely left the monastery at the Escorial, to which he retired at Elizabeth's death, when rumour already began to whisper the name of his fourth wife. And while great and small in Spain were lamenting the loss of the best

¹ Brantôme "Vies des Dames illustres," 4me discours.

² Du Prat.

³ *Ibid.*

Queen that they had ever had or ever hoped to have, Philip was negotiating his marriage with his niece, the Archduchess Anne, the daughter of his sister Maria and the Emperor Maximilian II.

The marriage was popular, owing to the great desire for an heir to the throne. Isabel and her sister Catherine were brought to Madrid to greet their step-mother. Great pains were taken to persuade the children that it was their own mother; but Isabel could not be deceived, and cried bitterly.¹ The new Queen, a girl of seventeen, treated the children with the greatest kindness. But her quiet, rather cramped disposition allowed little diversion, of which the French ambassador declared that the Queen of France had more in one day than the princesses had in a month. Once, in celebration of the birth of the heir to the throne, Isabel and her younger sister Catherine, with the royal family, might witness the game of *alcancias*, a kind of battle of flowers played by the cavaliers of Madrid on horseback, below the windows of the palace.² But, in general, pomp and respect, but little gaiety, surrounded the children. The young Queen's favourite employment was embroidering; she rarely left her own apartments, and her Court altogether resembled a nunnery. The ambassador bitterly complained of the lack of air and exercise from which the Infantas suffered.

Some parts of the year, however, were spent at Segovia, at Aranjuez, the spring residence on the Tagus, and at the beautiful park of the Pardo, where Philip was building a hunting-seat.³ There the Infanta spent

¹ Forquevaux to Queen Mother.

² Gachard, Bibliothèque nationale à Paris; Forquevaux, Jan. 1572.

³ Gachard, "Lettres de Philippe II. à ses Filles."



PHILIP II OF SPAIN

COELLO

Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels

her days among fountains and woodland scenes, gathering flowers, fishing, learning archery and hunting; and, if we are to give credit to the Court poet, slaying deer and even wild boars.¹ Gentler occupation she and her sister found in the care of their own little gardens, from which, in Philip's absence, they would send him flowers and even fruit.²

Philip had already begun to make a companion of Isabel, the one being whom he loved to the end of his life. As quite a child she was admitted into his study, to bring him the sheets to be folded up and put into packets to be addressed to his secretaries.³ Later, when she began to read, books of history formed her special delight. Philip took pleasure in acquainting her with matters of negotiations and government, in which she proved an apt pupil; though perhaps her panegyrist was guilty of slight exaggeration in declaring that greybeards were struck dumb by the words of wisdom which fell from her young lips.⁴

Father and daughter would spend many hours together at the same table, engaged in the King's favourite occupation of writing, whereby, according to a contemporary, "He despatcheth more than three secretaries; and in this manner, with his pen and his purse, governeth the world."⁵

The favourite distraction of Philip, in the rare moments when he was not occupied with affairs of state, was building and the embellishment of buildings; the chosen companions of his leisure moments were monks and artists. With these the Infanta early

¹ Tristan, "Peinture de la Serenissime Infante."

² Gachard, "Lettres de Philippe II. à ses Filles."

³ Forneron, III. 271, quoting Cabrera.

⁴ Tristan.

⁵ Birch, "Elizabeth," I. p. 83.

in her life became acquainted. Whenever the King visited the monks of St Jerome whom he had established in the monastery of the Escorial, when he visited his favourite painter Coello¹ in his studio adjoining the palace, the Infanta alone was by his side.² Etiquette was flung aside, no attendants surrounded them. In unrestrained companionship with her father, Isabel's tastes were formed.

¹ Alonso Sanchez Coello, the father of Spanish portrait-painting (Stirling-Maxwell).

² Forneron, III. 271.

CHAPTER II

PORTUGAL—THE KING'S LETTERS

The desire of Spanish monarchs for a union with Portugal—Marriages—The regency of Queen Catherine in Portugal—Her designs for the marriage of the Infanta Isabel and King Sebastian—Sebastian's disinclination—His enthusiasm for a Crusade—His meeting with Philip—The campaign of North Africa—Sebastian's death—The Cardinal Henry, King of Portugal—Philip's plans for the succession—Death of the Cardinal-King, after declaring Philip his heir—The native candidate, Antonio, proclaimed King—Alba invades Portugal—Subdues it—Philip's journey to Portugal—His letters to his daughters—The life of the Infantas at their father's Court—Marriage proposals for Isabel—Their failure—Marriage of the Infanta Catherine with the Duke of Savoy—The royal progress

THE unification of the Iberian Peninsula was an ideal which had been cherished by the rulers of Spain from the time of the union of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile under Ferdinand and Isabel. Yet the very union of these two kingdoms seemed likely to delay for an indefinite period the fusion of Portugal and Spain. Portugal had been, some centuries earlier, one of the struggling Christian states of Spain, not different in any essential from the other small territories which were finally combined to form large states.¹ She had fought a hard battle for independence, first against the Moors, later against Castile, and issued from the struggle with a feeling

¹ Lodge, "Close of Middle Ages," pp. 490-1.

of nationality—a desire for national development. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, Portugal led the nations of Europe in exploration and in colonial expansion. The union of Castile and Aragon had altered the position of Spain in Europe; and the connexion between Castile and Portugal, geographically and ethnologically so strong, seemed to be severed. For while united Spain now appeared to look eastward towards the Aragonese possessions in the Mediterranean, the interest of Portugal lay always on the high seas. Moreover, the friction which the union of kingdoms so dissimilar in race and custom as were Castile and Aragon must almost inevitably engender, seemed to offer special security to Portugal of unassailed independence. Yet from the first the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabel, pursued their plan of alliance, fusion being for the time impossible. Their eldest daughter was married successively to two heirs of the House of Portugal, and on her death her sister took her place, and became the wife of King Manuel the Fortunate and the mother of John III. The Emperor Charles V., a true Habsburg in his conception of the imperial destiny of his race, pursued the policy of his grandparents. His own vast possessions bore witness to the mighty edifice which judicious marriages can raise up. Alliances with the heirs of various princely houses had played the largest part in extending the Habsburg dominion from the Danube to the Atlantic, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The same policy might yet give Portugal, with its long coast-line in the Ocean, and its rich Eastern possessions, into the hands of the power which aimed, also, at the sole dominion of the seas. Hence the double marriages,

in two successive generations, between the houses of Spain and Portugal. Philip II.'s mother and his first wife were Portuguese princesses; the mother and the grandmother of young Sebastian, the last member of his house to reign in Portugal, were Philip's sister Juana and his aunt, Queen Catherine.

In 1573 the Princess Juana of Portugal died. Her death was a great loss to Isabel and her sister, for since the death of her husband nearly twenty years before, she had resided chiefly in Spain and had been principal companion and guardian of her brother's children. In Portugal the sovereignty lay in the hands of Juana's son Sebastian, who, at the age of three, had succeeded his grandfather John III., by the terms of whose will Queen Catherine remained regent for her grandson. For some years she had governed wisely, but finally she had been forced to yield before the intrigues of an opposition and to resign her authority.¹ Henceforth she devoted herself to the maintenance of a union between King Philip and Sebastian. The death of the Princess Juana deprived her of an ally, but she soon conceived a new plan—the marriage of Sebastian and Isabel, a project to which she gave all the energy of her last years.

In her endeavours Queen Catherine received support neither from Philip nor from the intended bridegroom. Philip's agent in Lisbon journeyed to Madrid bearing from Catherine ardent letters of appeal, urging Sebastian's love for the Infanta, insisting on his good health and fitness for marriage, pointing out the advantages of the match. Philip was steadfast in his refusal. He declared himself eager for Sebastian's marriage, he even suggested two brides, either of whom might be won;² but he was

¹ Danvila y Burguero, "Cristobal de Moura." ² Danvila y Burguero.

immovable in his resolution not to marry his daughter on account of her youth, Isabel being at the time scarcely eight years of age. Sebastian himself was not at all inclined to marriage, being wholly taken up with dreams of war, of chivalry. He had been educated by Jesuits, who, to correct an imagined tendency to vice which they observed in him, had filled his mind with the conception of a heroic life, spent in war against the infidel. His grandfather had lost to the Sultan of Morocco some possessions on the North coast of Africa, and these Sebastian determined to recover. A small reconnoitring expedition, in which he displayed great personal bravery, helped to strengthen his resolve, which his grandmother vainly strove to combat by urging his immediate marriage.

A personal interview between the two monarchs in the winter of 1576-7, at Guadalupe, had very little result. Philip extracted from Sebastian some sort of assurance that he would not lead the African enterprise in person. He, in return, promised Isabel's hand, when she should arrive at a suitable age. She was then ten years old, and therefore at the least two years must elapse before the pledge could be fulfilled. Philip is accused of instigating Sebastian to a project which he hoped and foresaw would lead to his destruction, especially by inducing the Pope to applaud the young King's enterprise. It is true that he offered his nephew some troops. But he seems wholly to have misjudged Sebastian's character, and not to have understood his single-minded, fanatical devotion to the idea of an African Crusade. He had promised 5000 troops for an attack on Larache; but he was assured by the Duke of Alba who was to lead them, that at least 15,000

veterans would be necessary to insure success. Philip thereupon withheld his reinforcements, thinking that the Portuguese ministry would be delighted to find, in his failure to provide troops, a pretext for discontinuing the enterprise. But as the year drew to a close, it was evident that Sebastian had kindled the enthusiasm of, at any rate, the younger among his subjects; and great anger was expressed in Portugal at Philip's vacillations. The young King wrote earnestly, begging for assistance, and leaving to Philip's discretion the publication of his marriage with the Infanta, for which he obviously cared very little. Still the old Queen Catherine hoped by this means to keep her grandson in Portugal, and almost on her death-bed she wrote a last despairing appeal to Philip, to give his younger daughter Catherine, if he would not part with Isabel. No marriage could have availed to check the enthusiasm of the young monarch. In June 1578 he set sail, in an enterprise against Larache, with Portuguese, Spanish and German mercenary troops. Sir Thomas Stukeley, an English Catholic in command of some Italian troops destined to raise insurrection in Ireland against Elizabeth, was stopped and pressed into service.

Enthusiastic, yet without knowledge of war, Sebastian soon met his fate. While he dallied in the Algarves and at Cadiz, while he amused himself with hunting in Africa, the forces of his enemy, the Sultan of Morocco, were concentrating. Declining the peace which was urged upon him, Sebastian went out eagerly to his destruction; to perish in the terrible slaughter on the field of El-Kasr el-Kebir, where the sun of Portugal "sank in clouds of blood."¹

¹ Eunes, "Portugal."

Philip had declined the throne of Portugal for Isabel ; now only one life stood between him and the realization of the dream of the unity of the Peninsula, that of the old and feeble Cardinal Henry. The Cardinal was the last surviving son of Manuel the Fortunate ; and though there were, in the persons of the daughters of Manuel's son Edward, claimants to the Portuguese throne, Philip hoped, if possible without force, to make good his claim. He was the son of Isabel, the eldest daughter of King Manuel.

In the intrigues which surrounded the Cardinal, Philip's chief rivals were Antonio, the Prior of O Crato, the illegitimate son of Manuel's son Lewis, who appeared to have a large following in Portugal, and the Duchess of Braganza, the daughter of Manuel's son Edward, whose defence of her title was never very strong.

Scarcely was Cardinal Henry proclaimed King, when Philip's envoy appeared at his court, to urge the Spanish King's claim to the succession. King Henry, indeed, hoped that he would be released from his vows as a Jesuit, and suffered to marry. But this Philip strongly opposed at the Papal Court ; and, indeed, the Cardinal's age and feebleness made it a plan which can hardly have been considered seriously. He was cowardly by nature, the knowledge of approaching death lent him no spark of courage, and he easily yielded to the numerous envoys from Madrid, who, during his short reign, beset him. A few days before his death he declared Philip his chosen heir to the Cortes at Almeirim. The ecclesiastical estate alone supported him ; and Philip, prepared to assert his claim in arms, had already set on foot his military prepara-

tions, when, on January 31st, 1580, the Cardinal-King died.

¹ Public opinion in Portugal ran strongly against submission to Spanish rule, and, before Philip and Alba arrived, the Prior of O Crato, the popular native claimant, was proclaimed King. Yet so carefully had all the officials, from the regents downward, been bought, that when Alba entered Portugal, practically no resistance was offered to his advance.

Philip was moving slowly towards the frontier. On March 1st the Estates of Castile were summoned to take the oath to his eldest son, Prince Diego Felix, then in his fifth year.² Granvelle was left as regent; and the King, accompanied by the Queen, the Prince, the Infanta Isabel and her sister, and the Archduke Albert, his nephew, passed to Guadalupe on the frontier of Castile. There Holy Week was spent, and Philip received ambassadors from Portugal, begging him to refrain from using force. He refused, declaring that he would assert his right as the legitimate heir and nominee of King Henry.

The royal family made their way slowly to Badajoz, where the army was assembled; and there the King and Queen were attacked by an epidemic of influenza which was at the time raging in the peninsula. The Queen, less fortunate than her husband, perished on October 26th. Her body was conveyed to the Escorial, while Philip for some days sought the solitude of a monastery near Badajoz.

¹ *Saint-Gouard*, French Ambassador in Madrid, wrote, "le peuple de ce pays est si portugais, qu'ilz se donneroyent plustost à ung Turc, qui le voudroit entreprendre, que de se soubzmettre à l'obéissance des Castillans." —Jan. 31st. 1580, Gachard, "Bibliothèque nationale à Paris," ii. pp. 560 *seq.*

² Gachard, "Lettres de Philippe II. à ses Filles," Introduction.

During the last days of June, Alba was occupying town after town in Portugal, meeting with practically no resistance. He soon arrived before Setubal, which Don Antonio, after having been proclaimed King at Lisbon and at Santarem, had reduced to his authority. Setubal was regarded as almost impregnable; but, aided by the fleet, commanded by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, Alba very speedily forced the place to surrender.¹ Shortly after, he defeated Don Antonio in person at Alcantara, Lisbon was taken, and on September 11th Philip II. was proclaimed King of Portugal.

Alba now urged the King to show himself to his new subjects; and, at the end of the year, Philip left Badajoz for Lisbon. A few days before he had taken leave of his children. The plague was devastating many places in Portugal, and it was decided that the children would be safer, besides being better cared for, in Madrid. The Archduke Albert, Isabel's cousin, and later her husband, alone accompanied Philip.

The King's journey through Portugal was a triumphal progress. Alba had stamped out all national resistance. The Duke of Braganza hastened to make his peace, in return for the honour of the Golden Fleece, and the office of Constable of Portugal. At the Cortes held at Thomar in April 1581, the people appeared to have forgotten their opposition to Philip, in the acclamations which greeted him when he swore to maintain the ancient privileges and customs of Portugal.² Don Antonio, the Prior of O Crato, alone offered any resistance. But the defeat at the Isle of Terceira of the French fleet under Philip Strozzi, which had been given to him by Catherine de' Medici, and the capture of the

¹ Gachard, Introduction.

² Danvila y Burguero.

Azores, rendered his cause hopeless. He fled to France and thence to England, where Elizabeth long maintained him, in the hope that he would prove a useful weapon against the King of Spain.

It was during the years spent in Portugal that the King wrote to Isabel and her sister the letters which throw such a flood of light on his relations with his children, and on their manner of passing their days. From his arrival in Thomar in April 1581 until his return to the Escorial in March 1583, the courier, who went weekly to Madrid, rarely failed to bring some cheerful, interesting letter to the motherless girls. However weary with his day's work, Philip would write to them, perhaps only a few sentences late at night, that they might have news of him. Far from harbouring the black designs which are usually attributed to him against Portuguese national life, Philip's letters reveal frank pleasure at the manner of his reception. He was in his most gracious mood. He journeyed through Portugal, observing all Portuguese etiquette, dressed in the Lusitanian fashion, completing by courtesy and clemency the work which Alba had begun with the sword. Only the chief delinquents were punished; and many honours were conferred, although it was found impossible to fulfil the demands of some of those whose brand-new loyalty required some recompense. The King swore to maintain Portugal for the Portuguese, and this oath was, at any rate during his lifetime, generally observed.¹

Philip displayed a keen interest in all the new customs with which he met, comparing them, for his daughters' benefit, with those familiar to them. The religious

¹ Danvila y Burguero.

processions he found generally superior to those in Spain; the dancing-women were also delightful, but the bull-fighting was poor. He expressed satisfaction that the girls were making progress in the study of Portuguese, and anxiety that Prince Diego, the heir to the throne, should learn the language as quickly as possible; and that he should receive the Portuguese envoys with special kindness and courtesy. The King looked upon his two elder girls as, in a measure, the guardians of the children of his fourth marriage; urging them to help the heir-apparent with his lessons, to take him with them on their visits, to have him taught dancing. Nothing concerning their health or pastimes was too small for his consideration. He held that the air of the palace in Madrid was too stuffy; and urged upon Isabel and her sister the necessity for air and exercise. Indeed, judging from the frequency with which the royal children were attacked by fevers, and other complaints—so serious as to prove fatal in the case of the heir to the throne,—we must conclude that the royal palaces were anything but healthy abodes. Philip encouraged his daughters to tell him of their visits to their friends the monks and nuns, to describe the progress in the construction of palaces, churches and parks, to dilate upon their joy in hunting and archery. He would ask them how much they had grown; advise them what to wear at a court-wedding. His letters breathe pleasure in river voyages, in beautiful scenery, in the grand sight of the launch of a galleon. Wherever he went he sought to find something to send to his children; picture-books for the babies, chaplets, some new porcelain, fruit, flowers, roses, orange-blossoms, violets. He promised Isabel and Catherine, who had sent him a

peach from their own little garden, to bring them a plan of the Portuguese pleasure-gardens, with which he expressed himself delighted. He wished that they could be with him, to enjoy all the new and wonderful sights with him. Still more he longed to be at home ; to see his children ; to hear the lisping voice of his baby son, whom he had not seen since his infancy ; even to hear the nightingales sing in their familiar haunts.

Sympathy, affection, and an appreciation of beauty were indeed strong in Philip, when they were not combated by his far stronger sense of duty. In all the letters there would be nothing to remind us of the conception of Philip as a gloomy, joyless soul, were it not for his presence at a great *auto-de-fé*, the ceremonial of which lasted more than four hours, and yet was shorter than was customary in Spain.¹

While he was in Portugal, the King had felt that he was rapidly ageing. He was, it is true, not yet sixty, but his stern devotion to work, the disappointments which he had already experienced, the loss of his wife, and, lastly, the death of Diego, the heir to the throne, during his absence, had made him prematurely an old man. His hair was now quite white ; he was frequently a martyr to gout, being sometimes attacked in the right wrist, the hand which, literally, directed all his far-reaching plans. He was rapidly losing his teeth ; no doubt, as he rather humorously wrote to his children, the little Infanta Maria's teeth were coming so quickly in recompense. This child, in whom Philip displayed the greatest interest, died within a few months of his return from Portugal, and of his fourth marriage only

¹ Letter, 1582, April 2nd.

one child, the small and delicate Prince Philip, was left him.

Isabel, at the age of eighteen, was at the height of her beauty. At her father's court she was held to be peerless, and writers of prose and verse vied with each other in extolling not only her person, but her intellect. Skilled in all sports, she played and danced well, and was a great lover of music and poetry; she was her father's pupil in history and the science of politics. Her sister Catherine, a year younger than herself, though neither as handsome nor as gifted, lent by her light-hearted, merry disposition an air of gaiety to the Court. Isabel had inherited her father's colouring. Her fair, stately beauty, contrasting with her sister's dark, sprightly piquancy, formed a picture so charming as to fire any imagination. Many an ardent gentleman, "sighing like furnace," tuned his lyre to a "woeful ballad," romantically despairing; many a gallant courtier, exulting in the gracious, youthful presence, which filled the Court with light, broke forth into verse, in honour of the princesses who lent such lustre to their great father's house. Among these delicate trifles, one, the work of a Portuguese gentleman, ran somewhat thus:—

With rays serene the two Infantas shine,
Through the wide world their brightness doth abound:
Like the two poles whereon the heavens recline,
Or suns that do the earth with light surround.
Thus by the splendour of their noble line
Is Austria's sovereign name with glory crowned.
Fair Isabel and Catherine as fair,
Each without equal and beyond compare.¹

¹ *Note.*—These lines, printed by Danvila y Burguero in his work, *Cristobal de Moura*, pp. 732-3, are contained in "El Pastor de Philida,"



THE INFANTAS ISABEL AND CATHERINE

C OELLO

Prado Museum, Madrid

It was only natural that the courts of Europe at the time were occupied with gossip and intrigue with regard to the marriage of these two princesses, so desirable both in their own persons, and because of their father's dominating power. The story of the failure of the plans for Isabel's marriage with Sebastian of Portugal has already been related. While the negotiations between Philip and Queen Catherine still continued, another claimant for the Infanta's hand appeared, in the person of her mother's brother, Francis de Valois, the Duke of Anjou and Alençon. He was a vicious young man, without character or courage, but with sufficient ambition to aim at the sovereignty of the Netherlands. Many were the schemes which, in the course of his short life, he prepared for the attainment of his object. At the age of eighteen he had been proposed as a husband for Elizabeth of England, then in her fortieth year; with the purpose of uniting the two powers of England and France against Spain. The proposal, though never abandoned, and revived with great vigour several years later, lapsed for a time. In 1577 general rumour declared Alençon the chosen husband of Philip's elder daughter, then in her twelfth

verses composed by Luvis Galvez de Montalvo, gentleman courtier, dedicated to the most illustrious señor don Henrique de Mendoça y Aragon, printed in Lisbon in 1588. In the original the poem runs thus:—

Las dos Infantas que en el ancho suelo
 Con sus rayos clarisimos deslumbran,
 Como dos nortes en que estriba el cielo,
 Como dos soles que à la tierra alumbran ;
 Son las que à fuerza de su inmenso vuelo
 El soberano nombre de Austria encumbran
 Bella Isabel y Catalina bella ;
 Esta sin par y sin igual aquella.

year.¹ As the husband of Isabel, he hoped to get a strong foothold in the Netherlands, where Philip's Governor, Don Juan of Austria, was unsuccessfully striving against Orange. For some months Anjou adhered to the plan, giving out as a certainty that Philip II. was to bestow his daughter on him, though it is doubtful whether the King of Spain ever seriously entertained the idea.² Then events occurred which caused the fickle youth to change his plans and to discontinue his courtship of his niece. For years he and his mother, Catherine de' Medici, had been negotiating with William of Orange. At the beginning of 1578, the Estates-General of the Netherlands, after the defeat inflicted by the Spanish general, Alexander of Parma, were no longer in a position to disregard French overtures. Anjou was invited to enter the Provinces. He received the title of "Defender of the Liberty of the Netherlands," and having thus attained his object, and gained a footing in the Low Countries, his desire for the Spanish marriage was at an end. This courtship, if such it can be called, was the first suggestion of the grant of the sovereignty of the Netherlands to the Infanta, which was later on to play such an important part in her life.

Isabel was not left long without a suitor for her hand, after Anjou's renunciation of his pretensions. While Philip was in Portugal he received a visit from his sister, the widowed Empress Maria, anxious to complete the negotiation for the marriage of Isabel with her son the Emperor Rudolf. Negotiations had been proceeding for many years, and indeed the match had

¹ "Calendar of Foreign State Papers," 1577-8 ; Davison to Walsingham, Sept. 19th, 1577.

² *ibid.* 1578, Jan. 18th, March 1st and March 23rd.

been suggested in the Infanta's earliest infancy. Philip gave his consent, and it seemed probable that the union would very shortly take place. We have no account of the cause of its abandonment. Perhaps Philip came to look upon Isabel as his probable heir on the throne of Spain; only the life of the sickly Prince Philip stood between her and the inheritance. Perhaps her indifferent health, or his great affection for her, induced Philip to keep his eldest daughter at his side all his life. Whatever the reason, Isabel did not become the wife of her cousin Rudolf.

Philip had for some time desired an alliance with Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, the son of that Duke of Savoy whom it was proposed to bring into the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis by marrying him to a Valois princess, at the time of Philip's own marriage with Isabel's mother. Philip considered the friendship of this ruler of the utmost importance for the safety of his territories in Italy, to assure communication with the Netherlands, and also in his relations with France. No difficulty stood in the way of the marriage of the Infanta Catherine. The marriage-contract between her and the Duke of Savoy was signed in 1584, and in January 1585 Philip set out with the two Infantas and their brother to meet his son-in-law. He had decided that he would make his daughter's marriage the occasion of a royal progress through his kingdoms of Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia, rarely visited by him. He was received with great pomp at Zaragoza, the capital of Aragon, whither the young Duke of Savoy had come to meet his bride. There the marriage was celebrated, and was followed by a fortnight of magnificent festivities. Philip and Isabel then accompanied the Duke and Duchess to Barcelona, where they

were to embark for Nice. Catherine's farewell to her father and sister was very touching. Fortunately, she could not foresee that she was not to meet either of them again. She died in Turin in November 1597, at the age of thirty, about a year and a half before Isabel passed through Italy on her way to the Netherlands.

Isabel accompanied her father and brother to Monzon, where the Cortes of the Kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon swore allegiance to the heir to the throne, and thence, by way of Valencia, back to Madrid. This great royal progress, extending over more than a year, surrounded by the luxury and culture of Spain and Italy at the close of the sixteenth century, was the last occasion in the reign of Philip II. on which the brilliancy of court life was displayed. Henceforth Isabel's life passed amid sterner, more monotonous surroundings. She was the companion of one whose merit was dogged perseverance, whose life was absorbed in gigantic projects whereby he was doing what he conceived to be his duty, as the avenger of the Almighty against the heretic.

CHAPTER III

THE "ENTERPRISE OF ENGLAND"

Isabel's life with her father—Philip II.'s great projects—The "enterprise of England"—Philip and the English Catholics—The landing of Campion and Persons in England—Persons' political work—Philip and Mary, Queen of Scots—The Throgmorton Plot—The dualism of French and Spanish interests—The growth of a new Spanish design—Philip's political views—Olivares and Pope Sixtus V.—The Infanta Isabel to be Queen of England—The Babington Plot—Philip's views revealed—Philip and the Jesuits—Plans for the conquest of England—Drake at Cadiz, 1587—The Great Armada—The Infanta's candidature still maintained in secret—Intrigues with the Scotch—James VI.'s triumph—The petition of the English Catholics—The second Armada, 1596, to attack through Ireland—The failure of the third Armada, 1597—Philip's bankruptcy

DURING the years in which the Infanta received her training in public affairs, while she shared her father's secrets and helped him in his work, Philip's two great projects, the enterprise of England, as it was called, and that of France, were matured, put into execution, and failed. In each Isabel was assigned a part. It seemed as if, while they sat alone together in the room at the Escorial, where more and more Philip spent his time, the Infanta's image would weave itself into his plans, and she became ultimately the weapon which he strove to use against his enemies.

From the time of the peace of 1559, it had been clear to the Catholic powers that Elizabeth Tudor on the

throne of England, lending countenance and aid to the rebellious Protestant subjects of Philip in the Netherlands, and encouraging the Huguenots in France, constituted a great menace. Both powers were for many years so engrossed in the difficulties of maintaining their own territories, that little attention had been given to England. Philip's only effort for the restoration of the faith was the support which he lent to the English Romanist exiles abroad, and to the Catholic Colleges recently founded at Douai, Reims and Rome, whence missionaries were sent out to England. The change came in 1580, with the landing of the Jesuits Persons and Campion in England. Jesuits now for the first time took an active part in the English mission, which in their hands assumed a political aspect. It is true that the Northern insurrection of 1569 had been instigated by Dr Morton and other clerical emissaries from abroad, but they had acted independently of Father Allen, the head of the Douai College. It does not appear either that the Papal Nuncio, who brought some Italians and secret aid from Spain to help the Irish rebellion in Kerry in 1579-80, was acting with the knowledge of the missionaries.¹ Persons and Campion, sent from the English College at Douai, were ostensibly engaged in missionary work, and therein did not differ from the hundred or so of their kind who had already been drafted to England. Campion indeed appears to have devoted himself, until his death, to spiritual work; passing from one Catholic house to another, striving to lead the errant back to the fold. But Persons' masterful temperament could not be content with such a position; and from the first he was sus-

¹ "Archpriest Controversy," vol. I.

pected by the English secular clergy, who were generally credited with sincere loyalty to the throne. In spite of his declaration that he meant strictly to adhere to the instructions which forbade him and his colleagues from intervening in affairs of state, Persons was, in little more than a year, communicating with Bernardino de Mendoza, Philip's ambassador in London, and with the Catholic intriguer, the Duke of Lennox in Scotland, for the release of Mary, Queen of Scots, a prisoner in England. Shortly afterwards he joined the Jesuit Father Allen abroad, and the two eagerly fomented the conspiracies which ultimately led to the Great Armada.

While Philip was lord of the Netherlands, friendship with England was a necessity. That this England must if possible be a Catholic power was evident; more especially as his struggles with his recalcitrant Protestant subjects in the Netherlands offered the Protestant ruler of England a weapon of offence against him. Hence the importance of Mary Stuart, the Romanist heir of Great Britain. For a while Philip loyally adhered to the plan of restoring Mary, and of supporting James Stuart, her son, as her heir, if he could be converted to Roman Catholicism.

But Philip was not alone in his interest in the Stuart succession. Henry, the Duke of Guise, the leader of the extreme Catholic party in France, and the cousin of Mary Stuart, hoped by his influence to make French interests predominate in Great Britain. There thus began a struggle between the French and Spanish powers, at first covert, for the control of the future Catholic rulers of Great Britain; and it was this dualism which forced upon Philip the view that even if

Catholic, England would not necessarily prove an asset to the Habsburgs, and which led him to abandon his position of loyalty to Mary Stuart in favour of dynastic projects.

From the first Mary appears to have been convinced that she had more to gain from Spain than from France, and her efforts, and those of Esmé Stuart, Duke of Lennox, and the Jesuits who surrounded James VI. in Scotland, were concentrated in an attempt to bind the crafty young King irrevocably to Philip. This was against the general opinion prevailing among Scotch Catholics, which favoured French support. The cleavage between French and Spanish interests appeared in the Throgmorton Plot (1583), in Guise's anxiety that the Spaniards should not proceed to Scotland or the North of England alone, but that he should co-operate by landing French troops in Sussex.¹

The discovery of the plot led Philip to adopt wider and less honest aims. Up to this time his counsellors knew nothing of any desire beyond that of loyally helping the Queen of Scots. "We cannot hope to hold the island for ourselves," wrote Granvelle,² protesting that his Majesty had no intention of endangering the liberty of Great Britain by landing a large force. Yet this was exactly the position which Philip very soon adopted. Many factors combined to lead him to it. The English and Scotch Catholics were intensely jealous of each other, and the English Catholics, fearful of a Scotch-French dominion, followed the Jesuits in their declaration that they wanted no other patron than the King of Spain. James Stuart, Philip was convinced,

¹ Martin Hume, "Calendar of Spanish State Papers," vol. iii.

² Martin Hume, "State Papers," iii.

was shifting sand. Moreover, he was determined to be rid of Guise. The Duke, to Philip's consternation, had declared that after the peaceful establishment of the Queen of Scots, if anyone attempted to frustrate his intention that all foreigners should retire, he (Guise) promised that he and his forces "will join the people of the country to compel the foreigners to withdraw."

Philip further realized that if Guise could be persuaded to turn his energies to a consideration of the Huguenots in France, civil war would soon begin again in that country, and thus neither Henry III. nor the Huguenots would be in a position to help Elizabeth, nor would Guise be able to aid James Stuart. This conviction grew into certainty when, in 1584, the feeble Duke of Alençon, King Henry III.'s only brother, died childless; and Henry of Béarn, the heretic King of Navarre, became heir to the French throne.

While he thus ousted Guise from at any rate the principal share in the English enterprise, Philip strove to secure papal countenance and money for his project. The intrigues of the several powers now centred in Rome, where Sixtus V. occupied the Holy See. He was a moderate man, who had been elected in 1585 after the defeat of Philip's candidate; and was therefore not likely to prove complacent to the Spanish King's plans of political expansion. He was, however, very anxious that some great religious undertaking should be accomplished during his tenure of office. The difficulty was to find the means. His treasury was empty, his revenues anticipated; and the College of Cardinals a hot-bed of corruption and intrigue, the members of which were generally the creatures of one or other of the European Catholic parties.

It was Philip's plan, under the cloak of a religious enterprise, to win the support and financial aid of Sixtus; and with this object Olivares, his ambassador in Rome, alternately bullied and coaxed the Holy Father. As long as was possible, the motive of political aggrandisement must be concealed. For, as Philip foresaw, as soon as the mask of religion was dropped, he would lose the support of all English Catholics except the extremists, while opposition would be roused from every one of the foreign powers who at present dared not oppose the so-called Crusade against the heretics.

By 1585 the time seemed ripe for strong action against England. Antwerp had fallen (June), the Southern Netherlands at any rate were secured to Spain; and Philip considered that the Prince of Parma, the Governor, was in a position to move against England. Preparations were going forward for a direct attack, while in England the Babington conspiracy was being hatched.

Mary Stuart at the same time, with the connivance of Walsingham, was, after eighteen months' close confinement, once more able to carry on communications with her allies abroad. She used her liberty to give herself over entirely to Spain, disinheriting her son, whose religious opinions were still exceedingly doubtful, in favour of Philip, "considering the public welfare of the Church before the private aggrandisement of my posterity."¹ This inheritance, to which the Jesuits had long since pointed out his right as a descendant of Edward III., through his son, John of Gaunt, Philip had determined to transfer to his daughter Isabel.

¹ Martin Hume, "Calendar of Spanish State Papers," iii. Mary to Mendoza in Paris, June 1586.

Walsingham's revelation of the Babington plot, with the implication of Mary Stuart and her condemnation, added to Philip's difficulties. Thus far he might claim to have hoodwinked the Pope successfully. In February 1586, Olivares, who had instructions to obtain 1,000,000 crowns in support of the enterprise, wrote that "His Holiness is quite satisfied that your Majesty has not thought of the succession of England. . . . I also see that he is far from imagining that your Majesty has any intention on behalf of anyone of your own."¹ Olivares thinks that the Pope will not fail to raise some difficulty; and suggests that the money, if once obtained from him, should be restored; and that in return the King of Spain should urge that "in compensation for your Majesty's contributions the succession of that realm shall be the dower of the Lady Infanta Doña Isabel."

The condemnation of Mary Stuart made the succession question one of imminent importance. Philip had reproved Mendoza for making mention of his claim, but in February 1587 he ordered Olivares to approach the Pope in such manner as he thought fit, and endeavour to obtain a secret brief declaring that, "failing the Queen of Scotland, the right to the English Crown falls to me. My claim," continues Philip, "as you are aware, rests upon my descent from the House of Lancaster, and upon the will made by the Queen of Scotland." He adds that Olivares is to impress upon his Holiness that Philip cannot undertake a war in England, in order to place upon the throne a young heretic like the King of Scotland. On the other hand the Pope must be assured that "I have no intention of adding England to my

¹ Father Knox, "Cardinal Allen."

own dominions, but to settle the Crown upon my daughter, the Infanta." ¹

Sixtus V. was not at all easy in his mind ; but after much haggling he at length pledged himself to supply 1,000,000 crowns for the Armada without imposing any conditions. At the signing of the warrants the question of the actual sovereign to be appointed in England was raised ; but it was finally left to the King's decision ; and Olivares was of opinion that the King might nominate whom he chose.

All this was very much against the advice of the Jesuits, Allen and Persons, who had for years been urging Philip to action. According to them, the time to urge the royal claim by descent would come "when God has given victory to your Majesty's arms." Until then it should be the King's pleasure that the Lady Infanta and her husband should enter upon the succession by the way and title of conquest, and not by the way of blood-relationship, for which purpose it is necessary that this right of conquest should come first ; and they urge that the sooner the Infanta is provided with a husband the better.

The argument and plans of the Jesuits are subtle. When the whole realm and the adjacent islands are in the hands of his Majesty, and the fortresses and strong places powerless to oppose him, then will be the proper time to deal with the question. If the Queen of Scots be dead (as she probably will be, for the heretics, having her in their hands, and believing the enterprise to be in her interest, will assuredly put her to death), there will then be no other Catholic prince whose claims can clash with his Majesty's. On the other hand, if she be

¹ Martin Hume, "Calendar," etc.

alive, and married to the King of Spain's liking, the question of the King's succession can be taken in hand with her authority, and the claims of the House of Lancaster asserted.¹ Finally, the Jesuits urge that the conditions are highly favourable, and that everything depends on the invasion being swiftly carried through.

The Infanta's action after her establishment on the throne is discussed ; and also the question as to which persons of rank should be promoted or receive grants of the confiscated estates of the heretics. It was assumed that the greater part of the Protestant nobility would be slain in defending their country against the invader. This would leave the way open for the creation of a new nobility ; and this nobility, led by Cardinal Allen, the proposed new Archbishop of Canterbury, in conjunction with the new Catholic bishops, would enable the Infanta to carry through Parliament all the proposals of the Catholic King.² This vote of the Parliament would disarm the criticism of the Pontiff, and hence of the European Powers.

Unfortunately for Philip's hopes of sovereignty for his daughter, the slowness of the preparations in Spain and the vigilance of Walsingham, enabled Elizabeth to destroy the Armada of 1587 in Cadiz harbour, before it was ready to put out. So carefully were the English coasts guarded, that, according to one of Philip II.'s spies, "not even a strange fly can enter an English seaport without its being noticed."³ With such admirable secrecy was the real destination of Drake's and Hawkins' expedi-

¹ Paper delivered to Olivares in Rome, March 18th, 1587. Martin Hume, "Calendar," iv., and Knox, "Cardinal Allen."

² Martin Hume, "Calendar," iv.

³ Hume, "Calendar," iii., Introduction.

tion concealed, and Philip's spies and ministers hoodwinked into the belief that it was intended to go to the aid of the Portuguese Pretender, Antonio, either in Portugal or in the Indies, that on the very day in April that Mendoza, from Paris, gave the first hint of the real objective of the English fleet, Drake sailed into Cadiz harbour.¹

The destruction which he wrought decided that, for that year at any rate, no fleet could put out; and the Infanta would have no opportunity as yet of meeting her English Parliament.

The story of the destruction of the Great Armada of 1588 has been too often told to need repetition. As the wrecks of this mighty force crept back to Spain, it was patent to all, except to Philip, that the possibility of a conquest of England had passed for ever. Spain was weakened and demoralized to the last degree by the defeats into which Philip's system had led her. Elizabeth herself was strengthened by the ever-growing hostility between the Jesuits and the Catholic secular priests and laymen both in England and abroad. The more moderate Catholics, as Philip had foreseen, had been estranged by the revelation of his political aims. His only chance of retaining their adherence had lain in striking very swiftly and successfully; and in this he had failed.

Even the Catholics who had helped Philip, until the time of the Armada, were gradually alienated by the strong Jesuit advocacy of the Infanta's claims. They became increasingly anxious to make their peace with the Queen; and from the Netherlands, where the majority of them had taken refuge, they wrote, offering

¹ Martin Hume, "Calendar," vol. iv.

to reveal the Jesuit plots, and in other ways striving to win Elizabeth's pardon.

The defeat of the Armada and the defection of so many of the English Catholics could not persuade Philip to abandon the project of placing the Infanta upon the throne of England.¹ Yet the Jesuits could not induce him to give her claim official announcement. He set himself laboriously to build a new fleet, whilst he pursued a method of indirect attack, by intriguing with the Scotch and with the Irish Catholics.

The Scotch nobility, the Lords Huntly, Errol and Angus were led, as Mary had been before, into complete dependence upon Spain. Philip's great object was to exclude James VI. altogether from the English succession; and this intention James parried with all the artifice of which he was capable, winning Elizabeth's approval by his expressed indignation at a foreign dominion, reassuring moderate Catholics by his marriage with a Catholic princess, frustrating the designs of the Catholic traitor lords by himself entering into negotiations with Philip of Spain. A plot formed to seize James' person in 1593, simultaneously with an attack of English and Irish Catholic troops under Sir William Stanley from Flanders, which were to support the rebel Lords Westmorland and Dacre from England, was enthusiastically received by the Jesuits. But finally, owing to Philip's procrastination and James' energetic action, Huntly and Errol were defeated by James' forces in arms, and driven into exile (1595).

In England and abroad the gap between the Jesuits and the secular Catholics was ever widening. More and more the moderate Catholics were hoping for the

¹ Martin Hume, "Treason and Plot."

conversion of James Stuart, as the solution of the vexed succession question. Those who viewed with dislike the accession of a Scotchman in England, sought an escape from foreign dominion in proposing various English candidates to the throne. Of these the most interesting was Arabella Stuart, a cousin of James VI., the daughter of Darnley's younger brother Charles, Earl of Lennox. At one time there was a suggestion of her marriage with Ranuccio, the son of Parma, Philip's general in the Netherlands. But in 1594, with the appearance of "a conference about the next succession to the Crowne in England," written by Persons under the title of Dolman, the Spanish party among the English Catholics formally adopted the Infanta's claim. As an expression of their feelings, an address was in 1596 sent to Spain, wherein, after dwelling upon the necessity which lies upon his Holiness and his Majesty of nominating some Catholic heir, unless England is to be lost for ever to a heretic, they proceeded to enlarge upon the difficulties which attend all candidatures except that of the Infanta, who "it is well known . . . descends directly through various lines of the royal house of England, and has more than one claim to the throne, apart from that which your Majesty may confer upon her, if your Majesty pleases."

Philip's reply to this petition was the sending of the *Adelantado* in October 1596, with a fleet quite inadequately manned or supplied, to combine, so it was understood, with an attack from Ireland. For years Philip had been negotiating with the Earl of Tyrone and the band of Irish Catholic chiefs who hated the English, and were in a continual state of war with the English governor of Ireland. It was a far more pro-

missing field for action than Scotland, for there was no native King and no feeling against the Spanish dominion. But Philip had as yet been unable or unwilling to give any effective help to Tyrone, who had on several occasions suffered defeat. The fleet which now put out could never, as is obvious from the Admiral's own remonstrances, have effected anything; its wreck off Finisterre blighted all hopes except those of the unconquerable ruler. During the summer Essex, Raleigh and Lord Thomas Howard had landed at Cadiz and wrought havoc and destruction, while Medina Sidonia, Philip's choice for the command of the Great Armada, bewailed the defencelessness of the Spanish coast. Preparations were meanwhile going forward for the sailing of the third Armada. As before, Philip insisted that it should sail, unprepared as it was, while all was confusion, and even the Adelantado had not the King's final orders. When he had already put out, he learnt that he was to seize Falmouth; but on entering the Channel he was met by a storm, and his fleet put back to Spain, without ever having sight of the enemy. It has been doubted whether Philip seriously meant so totally inadequate a force to attack England; and it is suggested that he intended only to frighten Elizabeth into making a treaty.¹ For Philip was now, in 1597, engaged in making peace with Henry IV. of France. He had decided that Isabel should marry her cousin the Archduke Albert, and rule with him in the Netherlands. He knew that he was a dying man. For years he had striven to place his favourite daughter on the throne of England. In so doing, he had exhausted Spain, and in the great defeat of the Armada of 1588, he had lost for

¹ Martin Hume, p. 260, "Treason and Plot."

ever the dominion of the seas. But as yet Europe could not see how low Spain had been brought. The third Armada of 1597 had inspired great terror in England ; the power of Spain still seemed most formidable.

Philip himself knew no defeat. But after the failure of the third Armada, he realized that for the moment no plan against England could succeed. Since he could not make Isabel a Queen, he would at any rate see her established in the Netherlands before his death. But the great schemes still continued. The business of the vast Spanish Empire centred in the Escorial, where the little white-bearded old man sat laboriously perfecting, on paper, the minutest details of plans, for the drafting of men who were completely demoralized, and deserted whenever a chance offered, for the employment of money, which did not exist, and could not be raised. For Philip's system had reduced him to bankruptcy. Europe knew that the King of Spain had repudiated his debts.

CHAPTER IV

A BID FOR THE THRONE OF FRANCE

Philip II. and France—Civil War—The Huguenot organization and the Catholic League—Philip's help—Henry of Navarre, the Huguenot leader, heir to the throne (1584)—Isabel's claim to the throne of France—Death of Henry III. of France, 1589—The titular Charles X.—Philip II., the Duke of Mayenne, and the young Duke of Guise—The Infanta's candidature proposed to the Estates-General of France—Unpopularity of Spain—Desire of a settlement with Navarre—Difficulties in the way of Isabel's election—Question of her marriage—No settlement—Henry of Navarre's victories—He goes to Mass—Philip's suggestion of a marriage between Henry IV. and Isabel—Henry IV.'s war against Spain—The Peace of Vervins—The Netherlands—Their troubles—Their settlement

DURING the last ten years of his life, while Philip was pursuing the plans against England which the destruction of the great Armada had wrecked for the time being, his resources were being further drained by enormous grants in men and money to the Catholic League in France. For many years the King had fostered disruption and civil war in France, in the first instance, merely to weaken a powerful enemy. But at the death of Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon, Henry III.'s only brother, in 1584, Philip foresaw other and wider possibilities. The King of France now remained the last male of the House of Valois; and next to him in the male line of succession stood Henry of Navarre, a remote relative descended through the Dukes of

Vendôme from Saint Louis. He was, since the murder of his young cousin Condé, the acknowledged head of the Huguenot party in France ; and, unless the Catholics received strong support, he might be able to wrest the Crown from them, and carry France over to the Calvinist heresy. Here was Philip's chance. His daughter Isabel was in the female line the eldest surviving descendant of the Valois Kings, her mother Elizabeth having been the eldest daughter of Henry II. of France. But what of the Salic Law, which excluded females from reigning ? Philip declared it a fiction, by which he could not be held. In his eyes the only bar to the succession was heresy, the bar which excluded Henry of Navarre from the throne.

It was injurious to Philip's position that, in spite of his daughter's descent, he could never pose as the national defender of Catholicism in France. When, in 1588, Henry III. had struck down Guise, the leader of the Catholic League, in order to rid himself of a hated tyrant, he found that he was not, as he had supposed that he would be, master in France, but that he had only exchanged one master for another. He was forced to fly for help to Navarre, against Guise's brother, the Duke of Mayenne, now the head of the Catholic League. Thus before Henry III.'s death, the Huguenots represented the royalist, national party, while the League was growing ever more democratic, anti-national and Spanish. At the King of France's death Navarre was, but for his heresy, the constitutional and legitimate heir. The League had, it is true, contrived to set up a puppet King, the shifty Cardinal of Bourbon, Navarre's uncle, under the name of Charles X., but it was recognized on all hands that

he was only a stop-gap. Meanwhile the civil war continued.

Within the League itself great difficulties met Philip. He was quite well aware that Mayenne was anxious to escape from Spanish domination, and that, the Cardinal of Bourbon once dead, he would probably make a bid for the sovereignty; and his following among militant Catholics was sufficiently strong to make him a dangerous rival. Philip's strength of support lay in Paris, where a body of violent demagogues had superseded the more respectable citizens in the government of the city. These, under the name of the Committee of Sixteen, dragooned the capital, and negotiated with Spanish agents without the knowledge of Mayenne. Philip found also a useful instrument in the person of Charles, the young Duke of Guise, the son of the murdered Henry of Guise. Had Philip devoted himself to quelling the rivalry between Mayenne and Guise, and to securing the marriage of Guise and Isabel, they might have been raised to the throne of France together. Mayenne, as Lieutenant-Governor of the Forces, was at the moment *de facto* ruler of France, and the popularity of Guise's candidature with Frenchmen might have been sufficient to carry Isabel to the throne. But he feared that this very popularity would lessen the influence of Spain. Philip had provisionally recognized the titular Charles X., but in return for the help which he had given, he asked for the title of "Protector of the realm of France."¹ Mayenne was determined that Philip should obtain no such hold upon France, and at his instigation, the King's request was refused by a council of ministers, nobles and burgesses. Philip thereupon

Chalambert, "La Ligue sous Henri III. et Henri IV."

set his hope on the Estates-General, who were to meet in the following year. Their past history gave him some reason to expect acquiescence on their part; for on the rare occasions when they had been summoned, the Estates had almost invariably been the docile instrument of a party. Furthermore, the Sixteen assured him that all Catholics longed to see him ruling in France. If he would not, they entreated him to choose for their ruler a member of his family; and they pledged themselves loyally to receive anyone whom the King of Spain might choose as a son-in-law. "*Car nous espérons tant de la bénédiction de Dieu sur cette alliance que, ce que jadis nous avons reçu de cette grande et très chrétienne princesse Blanche de Castille, mère de notre très chrétien et religieux roi St Louis, nous le recevrons, voire au double, de cette grande et vertueuse Princesse fille de votre Majesté, laquelle par ses rares vertus arrête tous nos yeux a son objet.*"¹

If Philip attached much importance to this declaration, he was doomed to disappointment. As soon as the Estates-General met, Mayenne urged them to come to an arrangement with Navarre, whereby peace could be restored under a Catholic King. When Philip's agents, Feria, the ambassador, and his subordinates met Mayenne, their relations were far from cordial. They accused him of being the sole opposition to the Infanta's claim, which they maintained the Estates were inclined to recognize. Rather unwisely, they informed Mayenne that they could quite well do without his adherence; and declared their intention of giving to his nephew, the Duke of Guise, the command of the

¹ Chalambert.

Spanish army which lay on the frontier. Mayenne replied with some warmth that if he wished he could raise the whole of France against them, and drive the Spaniards out of the country. But finally a hollow agreement was arrived at, Mayenne giving a kind of promise to support the Infanta's claim, in return for the command of the Spanish troops, which he heartily wished out of France. For the next few months negotiations proceeded between the Estates-General and Philip's agents on the one hand, and those of the King of Navarre on the other. Feria, Philip's ambassador, must have seen which way the wind was blowing. No enthusiasm met him in Paris. But when the commissioners appointed to treat with Navarre's deputies left Paris for Suresnes, where the negotiations were to take place, the joy of the citizens burst forth. Bonfires were lighted, and cries of "Peace, peace," followed the deputies through the streets.

Feria was coldly received by the Estates-General. He made large promises of support in men and money on his master's behalf, reminded them of the sums already spent by Philip, and in return asked that Isabel should be declared Queen, by right of succession, the Salic law being an imaginary law. He declared that his master's motives were zeal for religion and the re-establishment of unity in France, the Infanta being "*selon droit de nature, divin et commun . . . legitime reine de ce royaume.*" The retort that Philip's aims might easily be misread as political aggression did not daunt Feria. Weeks were spent in fruitless discussion as to the terms of the Infanta's title. It was already becoming clear that Navarre's conversion to Catholicism was only a question of time. The almost forgotten Cardinal of

Bourbon was hastily brought forward again, and for a moment it was even suggested that he and the Infanta should be married, and ascend the throne together.

Of the three Estates, only the clergy showed themselves inclined actively to support the Infanta. The nobility and the third Estate leaned more and more towards Mayenne, but were willing to discuss the choice of a French Prince as a husband for the Infanta; and on this discussion the whole negotiation finally fell to pieces.

Philip's agents can hardly have expected that their first suggestion would be accepted. They proposed that the Estates should elect as their King the Archduke Ernest, the eldest brother of the Emperor, declaring that Philip would give him the same support that he had offered with his daughter. But it was unlikely that France would accept two alien sovereigns of the house of Habsburg.

For a fortnight varying proposals were made and rejected. The Estates would elect a French Prince as King, and would be infinitely obliged if the King of Spain would approve their choice and give him the Infanta in marriage. Philip could not agree to an arrangement which would make his daughter merely the consort of an elected King. If he agreed to marry her to a French Prince, the selection must rest with him. Neither party would give ground; the Spaniards insisting on the election of the Infanta as the first step; while the Estates pressed for the election of a French Prince. The policies behind these two propositions were indeed fundamentally irreconcilable. Meanwhile the deputation which had been treating in private with the Spaniards reported in a way to put an end to all

intercourse. The Archbishop of Lyons, their spokesman, declared that the Spaniards were trying to strike an unequal bargain with them, by asking for "*une royauté présente sous l'esperance d'un mariage futur*," to which they could never consent. They were ready, as soon as the Infanta was married to a French Prince, to declare the two King and Queen together. But "*déclarer une reine étant encore incertain d'un roi*," would be to break the Salic law "*loi fondamentale de l'état et tellement engravée ès cœur des Français, qu'ils ne s'en départiront jamais*." The Estates, the Archbishop had continued, could not swallow Philip's pretension to the right of appointing a king for France. He was welcome to choose his son-in-law where he wished, but "*constituer un roi sur eux, cela dépendait de leur pouvoir et autorité et non de prince étranger*." This plain speaking appeared not to impress the Spanish envoys with the hopelessness of adhering to Philip's original idea. They refused a last suggestion to the effect that Mayenne should be empowered to send four French princes to Madrid, from among whom Philip should make choice of a son-in-law; and that thereupon the prince selected and her Serene Highness the Infanta should be declared King and Queen in the name of the Estates. At the refusal of the Spanish envoys to consider this, the negotiations were broken off. The Parlement of Paris, the legal authority in France, declared that every action taken, or to be taken thereafter for the establishment of a foreign prince or princess should be null and void, as being made in prejudice of the Salic law and the fundamental laws of the realm.

This declaration was, in reality, an attempt to force

the Duke of Mayenne to negotiate with Navarre. Had he done so, all question of Spanish dominion would at once have been at an end. But he hesitated to take a step which would have placed Navarre, still unconverted, in a dominating position. He stood between the King of Spain and the King of Navarre, unwilling to give adequate support to either. Rumour was still busy with the Infanta's name. The most frequent report was that Guise and Isabel had been jointly elected to the throne, that Mayenne had been forced to consent. The Infanta, said rumour, was coming in a few months with 30,000 men and 3 million crowns. The garrison of Paris was to be strengthened, and the Duke of Guise, at the head of 17,000 men, was advancing from the frontier. This report had, however, no solid foundation in fact. It represented Isabel's cause as still powerful, whereas it was practically hopeless. The young Duke of Guise himself was no longer inclined to contract an alliance with Philip's daughter, feeling that the King of Spain had only agreed to accept him, despairing of procuring the acceptance of any of his Austrian nephews. To Mayenne's jealousy of his nephew was added a conviction of the difficulty of securing a sufficiently large force, effectively to oppose Henry of Navarre. He was almost ready to resign all connexion with the Spanish claimants.

While the Infanta's star was waning, that of Navarre was rising. He was proving himself prepared for both war and peace. He was successful in arms, and he sent his envoys to the peace conference. He had moreover signified his willingness to receive Catholic bishops and theologians to "instruct" him. He was

only waiting for the right moment to declare his conversion.

On July 8th, 1593, about ten days after the Estates-General had dismissed Philip's envoys, the town of Dreux fell. This ended Navarre's campaign. His negotiations with the Papacy for his conversion continued, and his soldiers were forbidden to reopen hostilities in the neighbourhood of Paris, in order that ill-feeling might sink to rest. On July 23rd Henry received the bishops who were to undertake his "instruction"; on July 25th he went to Mass.

Though the French people acclaimed him their King, Henry was not yet properly acknowledged; only full papal absolution could receive the King into the Catholic Church from which a special papal bull had excommunicated him. While the negotiations with the papacy dragged their weary length, Mayenne made a last effort to bind Philip to him, in order to be able to demand his help, if he needed it. He suggested that his son should marry the Infanta, and that the two should succeed to the French throne together. But Philip realized who was King in France now, and as soon as Henry was firmly established, the Spanish King's envoy appeared at his court, offering him the Infanta Isabel as his wife. Henry, though realizing the emptiness of the offer, sent an envoy, the *Sieur de la Varenne*, to Spain, to learn Philip's real aim. *Varenne*, who had had interviews with both Philip and Isabel, was unable on his return to hold his tongue; and the affair, as it leaked out, caused considerable alarm among Henry's Protestant supporters. *Duplessis Mornay*, whom the King had only just succeeded in reconciling, had it on authority that *Varenne* had been ordered to bring back a portrait of

the Infanta¹; while Sully feared that Henry was allowing himself to be involved in a union with Spain, which would cost him the friendship of England, the United Provinces and the German Princes. But the agitation, though for a time it spread all over France, and produced much sporadic literature, soon died.

For a year Henry was engaged in bringing the parts of his realm, which still held out, to submission; and in extinguishing the League, which had indeed since his conversion, lost its *raison d'être*. Philip had abandoned all hope of the French throne for Isabel, but it was through his agency that France remained a Catholic power. It was, however, for the moment a moderate Catholic power, which compromised with all except extremists. The fountain from which the extreme Catholics drew their strength was the King of Spain and his allies, the Jesuits. The Huguenots were pacified by the Edict of Nantes, the Jesuits were expelled; and Henry IV. sought to cement the union of the many various elements of his realm by a national war against Spain.

For two years the war dragged on. Philip's generals won some successes, but the King was weary, and longed for peace. The war against England was bringing him nothing but disaster. He was suffering from a terrible disease, and knew that his days were drawing to an end. Henry IV. also was ready for peace. Many discordant elements within France still remained to be reconciled, and the country was suffering from the exhaustion following a long civil war. Negotiations, begun at Vervins in January 1598, terminated in a peace signed between the two powers on May 2nd. Elizabeth was

¹Chalambert.

not included in the peace ; and the United Provinces—the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands that had revolted from Spanish authority—refused to be brought in, as the treaty offered no recognition of the independence which they had virtually won for themselves.

With the preparations for a general peace, Philip turned his attention to the problem facing him, in regard to the government of his Netherlandish subjects. The northern provinces, indeed, were “rebel” provinces, but in his eyes they still formed part of his empire. While he had dreamt of dominion over France, he had conceived the plan of uniting France and the Netherlands, by the marriage of Isabel, the destined Queen of France, with the Archduke Ernest, at that time his deputy in the Low Countries. But with his defeat in France the dream vanished. It had indeed been the most filmy of all Philip’s unsubstantial visions.

For some years it had seemed clear to the ablest of Philip’s advisers that at the root of the difficulty of the government of the Netherlands lay the acute centralization of the King’s mode of government. Under this system, the governors of the furthest of Spain’s European possessions ruled, according to a fixed code, issued from Madrid, over a people who differed widely in blood, in their occupations and in customs, from the Spaniards. However great might be the understanding of the governors, the provinces did not benefit, for their advice was rarely taken by the Spanish government ; and if taken it was only after such a long period of procrastination that circumstances had changed, and the measures failed in their anticipated effect.

It was this policy of centralization which had been

the cause of all the trouble. The measures against which Granvelle, Margaret of Parma's adviser, who had a real sympathy for the Netherlands, had set his face, were those which caused the revolt, and the loss of the northern provinces. The nobility of the Netherlands were generally loose-living, extravagant folk, indifferent to religion, and hence tolerant. Religious persecution, so often practised in Spain, was against the tradition of the country; and hence Catholic and Protestant alike opposed Alba's Council of Troubles. Yet the country was not completely roused, and war did not blaze out in earnest, until Alba began his financial oppression, in an attempt to impose a tax,¹ usual in Spain, but which would have proved ruinous to a manufacturing country like the Netherlands.

William of Orange realized that dislike of the Spanish autocracy was far more widespread than religious disaffection; therefore he made his war-cry an appeal to patriotic opposition to a foreign tyranny, rather than Protestant hatred of Catholic persecution. It was his desire to unite Protestant and Catholic against Spain, and hence his preference of help from the Duke of Alençon, and his distrust of reliance upon Protestant England. It was only after he had failed to unite the Flemish towns irrespective of creed, that Orange fell back for support on the extreme fanatical Calvinist party, whose excesses alienated the southern provinces, where Roman Catholicism enormously predominated; and led them finally into alliance with the Prince of Parma, the King of Spain's governor, and general of a victorious army.

¹ (The *Alcabala*, a tax of one-tenth on the value of everything sold, except real property, in which case it was one-twentieth.)

The rule of Parma revealed to the full the difficulties of controlling any part of the Spanish dominions under Philip's system. Had the Governor been left to his task and supplied with sufficient troops and money, it is probable that he could have won back the majority of the so-called United Provinces. The Union of Utrecht, into which Orange had brought the seven northern provinces in 1579, did not bind them together very closely. For while Orange was the virtual Sovereign of Holland and Zeeland, the Duke of Anjou and Alençon had been set over the remaining provinces, which were suffering from the oppressions of the troops of their chosen Prince.

But Parma was not left to complete his work. He was called to give aid to Philip's projects first in England, and then in France. His troops were insufficient; and such as he had he was unable to pay, and hence they preyed upon the native population. With the rapidly approaching exhaustion of Philip's exchequer, the grievances of the troops grew worse. When, in 1594, the Archduke Ernest arrived in the Netherlands as Governor, it appeared that they had had no pay since before the death of Parma in 1592.¹

The condition of the Southern, the obedient provinces, over which alone the Spaniards, by the end of Philip's reign, actually ruled, was pitiable. The towns had been extraordinarily prosperous manufacturing communities. According to Margaret of Parma's computation, the very threat of the coming of Alba had caused 100,000 people to emigrate. They were mostly manufacturers, many of whom fled to England, where they helped to build up the cloth industry, which completed the destruction of that industry in Flanders. An attempt was made

¹ Potvin, "Albert et Isabelle-Fragments sur leur Règne."

to revive it, by forbidding the import of English cloth. But this measure, which might have been useful when workers were plentiful, was disastrous when, owing to the long wars and continual emigration, numbers were failing; and when raw material no longer came in abundance from Spain, but was allowed to go to foreigners.

Antwerp, formerly the most important commercial town in Europe, was completely ruined from the time that the Hollanders took Flushing. The revolted provinces held both banks of the Scheldt, which remained closed until the French Revolution; and the trade of Antwerp passed to Amsterdam. Owing to the continued presence of soldiery, the crops were ruined; and Parma wrote that in Flanders and Brabant, formerly the richest agricultural provinces, there was no sowing.¹ He declared that it was the saddest thing in the world to see the sufferings of the people; and stern soldier as he was, he wept at the sight of so much misery.

When Philip finally turned his attention to the provinces, their condition was even worse than it appeared to Parma. Even before the outbreak of the war against Spain in 1595, Henry IV. of France had sent his forces against the Spanish Netherlands; and throughout the war Artois and Hainault complained grievously of the sufferings which their proximity to France caused them.² The provinces were faced also by another and more successful enemy. This was Maurice of Nassau, the second son of the murdered William the Silent, now Stadtholder and Captain-General of the forces of the United Provinces. Maurice, in alliance

¹ Potvin.

² Gachard, "Etats-Généraux de 1600," Introduction.

with Queen Elizabeth and Henry IV., was rapidly advancing against the Spanish Provinces, and in 1594 achieved a signal success by capturing Groningen, one of the few places which Spain still held in the northern provinces.

More disastrous than the damage which he did, was the aid which he lent to the mutinous Spanish troops. With his help they captured several towns, and Philip's Governor was finally forced to treat with them and allow them to retain Diest in Brabant, not very far from Brussels, where they remained for more than a year. The Governor, the Archduke Ernest, who keenly felt the sufferings of the country, and who had made overtures of peace to the United Provinces, but had been repulsed, made known to Philip that he had learnt that nothing was left to the people "*sinon un grand crève-cœur et désespoir.*"¹ He had summoned the Estates-General, and they earnestly prayed for peace.

These ills Philip II. in the last year of his life turned to remedy. The Archduke Ernest had been succeeded in the government by his brother the Cardinal Archduke Albert. It seemed impossible that Spain, in her exhausted condition, could protect the Netherlands from the hostility which they incurred as her dependency. Moreover, were they independent, Spain would for ever be freed from the enormous drain of men and resources which for half a century had been weakening her. Philip therefore determined to erect the Netherlands into an independent state, under the joint sovereignty of his daughter Isabel and his nephew the Archduke Albert.

¹ Blaes, "*Etudes historiques sur le xvi.^e siècle. Le Gouvernement de l'Archiduc Albert.*"

CHAPTER V

A ROYAL DEATH AND A ROYAL MARRIAGE

Reasons for the cession of the Netherlands to the Infanta Isabel—The Archduke Albert, the Governor of the Netherlands, with the Infanta's procuration, takes the ratification of the Estates-General to the acts of cession—The meaning of the act of cession—The rights of Spain reserved—Albert leaves for Spain—The death of Philip II.—Isabel and her father—Accession of Philip III.—The new court—The journey to Valencia—Festivities—Albert's journey, with the King of Spain's bride—The marriages of the King and Queen of Spain, and of Isabel and Albert at Ferrara—The arrival of Albert and the Queen at Valencia—Isabel and her husband—The confirmation of the two marriages—The departure of the Archdukes from Spain

ISABEL was more than thirty years old when her father came to the decision which was fraught with such moment for her future life. A sovereignty was to be hers ; but not such as that of England or France, of which Philip had dreamt. A limb of her father's empire was to be hewn off for her ; the Netherlands were to be her dowry on her marriage with her cousin, the Archduke Albert.

The exhaustion of Spain, and the enormous cost of maintaining the Netherlands, was admitted on all hands. Yet there was much discussion as to the necessity of dismembering the great Habsburg empire. We do not know whether Philip consulted his daughter. The arguments which finally caused him to confirm the cession, which he contemplated, were those of Cristobal

de Moura, the Count of Castel Rodrigo, his favourite Secretary of State, with whom the Infanta shared her father's confidence.

The Count assured Philip that the dismemberment, far from weakening him, would strengthen him.¹ "Flanders," he declared, "is the portion of your Majesty's European Empire, which is farthest removed from its centre. The people of that province show the least affinity with the rest of your subjects in language, customs and laws. You cannot hope to maintain the Flemings in submission and obedience, as long as they have no sovereign who resides in their midst. Far removed from you, these people regard your government as foreign, and that is the principal cause of the progress which heresy and revolt have made in these provinces. For forty years they have been a prey to the fierce ravages of war. In vain have you by turns employed there your greatest captains to reduce your revolted subjects by force, and your most able ministers to restore harmony by diplomacy. The repugnance of these people to obeying an absentee prince has proved an insurmountable obstacle."

Moura points out that the danger is now greater than ever before. The power of the rebel states is daily increasing; France, which is now at peace, and England, where James will soon succeed, will be able to lend them greater support than ever. He is reduced to a shameful confession. "Experience has taught you that not the gold of Peru, not the soldiers of Spain, Italy and Germany, could bring you success against the rebels of Flanders, who carry war over the seas, and even threaten your Majesty's possessions in the Indies."

¹ Potvin, quoting Bentivoglio.

He maintains that there is only one way of preventing the loss of all the provinces of the Netherlands; and that is to give them as a dowry to the Infanta, to unite her to the Archduke, and thus at length fulfil the wishes of the Flemings by granting them sovereigns of their own. "The offspring which may be expected of so well matched a couple, will assure the possession of Flanders for ever, if not to Spain, at any rate to the House of Austria; and the close union which has existed, and will continue to exist unaltered between the two branches of this august house, will form an unseverable link between your successors and the masters of Flanders, and will bring inestimable benefits to Spain."

The Count, realizing that the severance of a portion of his empire would cause Philip a pang, reminded him that Charles V., his father, had divided his empire between the two branches of his house, and that this was an example which might be followed without loss of dignity. He ended his advice to the King in expressing the hope that the new policy might establish confidence in the place of jealousy; and that thus the torch of war might be extinguished, and the revolted provinces might be led to unite with the obedient provinces in restoring the ancient form of government.

Philip appears to have been at length convinced, and the knowledge that he was dying caused him to hasten to a settlement. In September 1597 letters were sent to the estates of each of the provinces, to the Estates-General in Brussels, and also to the provincial estates and the Estates-General of the "alienated" provinces. The latter deigned no reply. The obedient provinces expressed their joy at the cession; but many begged the King to continue to support them, for to leave them to

their own resources would mean certain ruin. Some of the estates asked for a guarantee of their liberties, for the maintenance of justice, for the continuation of commerce and navigation between Spain and the Netherlands. All intreated that peace be proclaimed.

In these letters there was no word of the clauses of the acts of cession, Philip apparently reserving to himself the right of dictating the conditions. He considered that as all the estates had given a general consent, it was only "of grace" that the terms of the act of cession, of the agreement of the Archduke and the Infanta, were communicated to them.

On May 6th, 1598, at Madrid, the King passed the acts of cession.¹ On August 15th the Estates-General, summoned by the Archduke Albert, in accordance with the procuration of the Infanta, by which she gave her future husband authority to rule over the provinces and to receive the oaths of the Estates, met in Brussels to ratify them. The Estates-General asked for a few days in which to consider terms so important to the Netherlands as those of the cession and of the marriage-contract. But Philip's spokesman considered this pretension absurd, declaring that such matters were for the King alone, who had the power "*de disposer de ses biens, les donnant en mariage ou aultrement.*"² The Netherlands were, according to the theory of the period, as expressed in this statement, the property of the King, and had no right to question the mode of their transfer. The King of Spain might dispose of them, as of any other possession, in the manner which best pleased him. On August 21st the letters patent of the cession, of the Archduke's consent, and of the Infanta's accept-

¹ Potvin, p. 76.

² Potvin, p. 77.

ance, having received the ratification of the Estates, were solemnly proclaimed. On the following day, in spite of the remonstrance of the Estates, the Archduke's departure for Madrid was announced.

It must be doubted whether, in making this cession, Philip was sincerely ready to establish an independent kingdom of the Netherlands. Rather, perhaps, he was striving to regain the allegiance of the provinces for his house, by a grant which was more apparent than real. The act of cession hedged the new sovereigns about with restrictions, which safeguarded the interests of the rulers of Spain.¹ The clauses of the marriage-contract made provision for the return of the Netherlands to Spain should the Archduke and the Infanta die without issue. Their offspring, if they had any, must marry princes and princesses of the house of Spain. And through all ages the sovereigns of the Netherlands must marry their sons and daughters according to the wishes of the heirs and successors of Philip II. on the throne of Spain.

Philip, it is said, had good reason to believe that the Archduke could have no children; yet he made with him a secret treaty whereby he could resume the sovereignty of the Netherlands even if there were any issue of the marriage, in return for an indemnity. He reserved for himself in a further secret clause, the right of placing Spanish garrisons in various strongholds. This was the nature of the sovereignty which Philip bestowed on his daughter.

Great was the indignation of the Estates at the departure of the Archduke while their country was in such sore straits. They exacted from him a promise

¹ Potvin, pp. 81-3, and Campan, "Abrégé historique du Règne d'Albert et Isabelle."

that he would speedily return with the Infanta, and that they should be summoned to give advice on the redress of their many grievances. The Archduke had been absolved from his priestly vows, and on the altar of the church of Notre-Dame at Hal, he put from him his red hat, and the other insignia of his cardinalate. He then, in obedience to Philip's formal command, prepared for his departure to Spain to fetch his bride. Before he left Brussels, though he did not know it, Philip lay dead at the Escorial.

In the last days of June the King had been carried to his favourite residence in the barren Guadarrama mountains, when he could no longer walk. For years all his leisure moments had been devoted to the construction of the Escorial. It was the great monument of his life : there he would lie in death. He was suffering from a terrible disease, and for weeks the Infanta had fed him with only liquid nourishment. Through all the agony which he suffered he made no complaint, nor did he lose faith in the ultimate triumph of the cause which he had so long championed. He lay in a little room adjoining the church, on the wall of which hung an allegory of the Seven Deadly Sins. Images and relics of saints surrounded him ; and while Isabel read to him passages from holy works, Philip murmured continually "Thy will, O Father, not mine, be done."¹ His last earthly thought was for his daughter, whom he had so tenderly loved. He had commended her to the care of her young brother ; and that the written word might remain when his spoken word had faded from the young man's memory, in his will he bade the Prince cherish Isabel,

¹ Cervera de la Torre "Testimonio autentico . . . del Rey Phelipe II.," 1599, pp. 118 *seq.*

“so dearly beloved by me ; for she was my joy and the very light of my eyes.”¹

Father and son had seen each other for the last time ; and Philip, with many a word of warning and advice, had resigned to his heir the dominion of the territories for which he had himself toiled so long and so untiringly. Two days before his death, Isabel was summoned to bid her father a last farewell. Philip gave her the ring of betrothal, which Alba had placed upon her mother's finger in Paris many years before.² For the sake of the girl-wife who had first shed a gentle light on his stern life, he bade the dearest child of their union never part from the ring, but to keep it for ever, in memory of her father and mother.

The last words which passed between them were such as must sink deep into Isabel's mind, and were to be the guide of her whole existence in the future. He spoke to her of the thoughts which now, at the end of his life, absorbed him—of her life to come in the Netherlands. He prayed her, as it had not pleased God to suffer him to see her married before he left her, as he had always desired, not to depart from the rule of life in which he had guided her.³ He urged her to strive, in the Estates which he was leaving her, for the glory of the Holy Catholic Church ; for that had been his principal object in giving them to her. Then Philip's thoughts turned to Albert, whom he would never see as Isabel's husband ; and he begged her to ask his help in the task which he had laid upon them.

Well might Philip be calm, as his end drew near. Boldly all his life had he wielded the sword of the Lord. When disaster smote him he had not flinched, but had

¹ Freer. Martin Hume, “Philip II.” ² Freer. ³ Cervera de la Torre.

gone out again and yet again to the fray. Now he was weary and full of years, and he asked only for rest. For him parting could bring no grief; he prayed only that his end might come soon.

But Isabel, who saw life fast ebbing from him whom she held dearest on earth, could not contain her sorrow, schooled as she was to restrain her emotion. As she knelt by his side and kissed his hand, a storm of agonized weeping shook her, as the feeble hand was stretched forth, and her father whispered his last blessing. So they parted; and as Isabel left his cell, Philip turned from all thoughts of earth. In his last moments he asked for the crucifix, which had comforted Charles V.'s closing hour. He died, clasping it to him, at dawn, on September 13th, while in the church the choristers of St Lawrence were chanting the early mass, which Philip had long since established for the salvation of his soul.

It needed no command from her dead father to urge Isabel to seek the friendly shelter of a convent in Madrid, there to hide her grief from the world. She was no stranger to sorrow. When her mother died, she was probably too young to realize her loss. But one of her earliest recollections was of the burial of the Princess Juana of Portugal, the gentle widow who had returned to her brother's house, after her short married life, to tend and care for her motherless little nieces. As Isabel grew to girlhood many sorrows cast their shadow across her life. The young Queen Anne, whose kindly presence had ruled her quiet life throughout her childhood, perished. Fever carried off the little brother and sister, whom her father had resigned to her care during his absence in Portugal; first the little heir, Diego, on whom Philip's hopes were set, and whose first steps in

knowledge Isabel had guided ; then the prattling baby girl, of whom she sent accounts to the anxious father who had hardly seen her. A few months before Philip's end, came news from Turin of the death of the Duchess Catherine, Isabel's sister, the gay, light-hearted girl who had been the companion of her youthful pleasures, and whom she had last seen as a bride thirteen years before. For all these, so dear to her, Isabel had mourned. But their loss, keenly as she felt it, did not overwhelm her as did that of her father. They had been the companions of a few years ; he was her very life, her guide, philosopher and friend. He had formed her tastes in childhood, and sympathized with her childish griefs and pleasures. He had taught her in her girlhood ; and in her more mature years she had been his intellectual companion. His sombre study, the long hours of silence which prevailed there, had never held terrors for her ; his industry did not weary her, as she worked at his side. She had grown up in the midst of his papers. In sorrow, and in his rare moments of rejoicing, Philip came to her, as she went to him. In his old age, when sickness had robbed him of all strength, she tended him and fed him, as a mother might feed a helpless child. Only once in Isabel's life had she been parted from him for long—on the occasion of his journey to Portugal. Now their long companionship was at an end, and her life seemed desolate. His existence had been stern and full of troubles, but it had been a grand, ceaseless battle for the ideals which he held sacred. These ideals were to be her inspiration, when his hand could no longer guide her. She left him, at peace at last, in the Escorial, the emblem of his life, which from the days of her childhood they had watched together, as it gradually

assumed its vast, splendid, gloomy aspect. She saw that in the dim, unknown life before her, she must with unwavering grasp unfurl once more the banner of the faith which had fallen from her father's lifeless hand.

The youth of twenty, who succeeded Philip II., was not moved by deep emotion such as stirred Isabel. The old King was hardly buried when the court began that display of luxury and extravagance which was to signalize the reign of Philip III. In his childhood and boyhood the young King had been docile and rather sullen, fond of study, and finding relaxation only in hunting and riding.¹ Philip II. had hoped that his son would, on his accession, follow the advice of Cristobal de Moura, an old and tried servant, who had long been his favourite secretary. But the Prince soon gave evidence that in spite of his docility, he could be as obstinate as his father. He had given his confidence to the young Marquis of Denia, who soon obtained complete mastery over him. When Philip II. lay on his death-bed, the young Prince asked who held the key of the treasury. On learning that it was Cristobal de Moura, he demanded that it should be given to him. Philip II.'s minister refused, declaring that it was not in his power to do so, without the King's permission. In order to justify his action he returned to the room, where the King lay dying, and told his master what had occurred. Philip, realizing that it was beyond even his power to control his kingdom after death, reproved de Moura for what he had done. Thereupon de Moura, bowing to the ground, handed the key to the Prince, who, without a word, left the room, and gave the key to the Marquis

¹ Martin Hume, "C. M. H.," III.

of Denia.¹ It was the signal that a new reign had begun. There were many who were weary of the enforced piety, of the monastic severity which had latterly swayed the Spanish court. The young King and his favourite were gay and eager for pleasure, and reckless enjoyment was the order of the day. It mattered not to a depraved nobility that Spain was in a condition of bankruptcy, that many places were devastated by plague and famine. While huge sums were spent on amusements, Philip III. and Denia pursued an aggressive foreign policy, plunging into war as if it were a tourney, bringing ever more suffering upon the already exhausted country.

But for the moment, at any rate, even the people seemed only too contented with the display and magnificence of the court, following on a period of sombre devotional exercises. In January 1599 the King and Isabel set out with the court for Valencia, where the Infanta was to meet her husband, who was escorting Philip III.'s bride, the Archduchess Margaret of Austria.

The journey from Madrid to the coast, through Castile, Murcia and Valencia, occupied a month, the inhabitants of every town and village exerting themselves to win approbation by some quaint display of local talent.² From the arrival of the court at Valencia, balls, banquets and masques followed each other until Ash Wednesday, when these pleasures gave way to daily visits either to the Cathedral or to some other of the churches or monasteries, with occasionally a day's hunting, a visit to the arsenal, and in the evening a tournament. In one of these entertainments, a masque

¹ Martin Hume, "C. M. H.," III. pp. 526 *seq.*

² "Relaciones historicas de los siglos xvi. y xvii."

given before the Infanta and her ladies in the King's apartments by the captain of the Naples fleet, the King and the Marquis of Denia took part; the cost to their host amounting to more than 5000 ducats. No penury could check the court in its pompous displays. One million ducats, three times the amount voted by the Cortes, were spent by the King on the festivities for his and his sister's wedding. This was only a third part of the sum disbursed by his nobles in their entertainments.

When Isabel and her brother had been more than a month at Valencia, the news came that the new Queen of Spain and the Archduke Albert had arrived at Vinaroz, to the north of Valencia; and in spite of their mourning the courtiers donned their gayest raiment, to do honour to their King's young bride.

On leaving Brussels in September 1598, Albert, with a train of 2000 men and 1000 horses, made his way through Luxemburg, the Palatinate, and the territories of the Dukes of Württemberg and Bavaria, all his expenses being defrayed by his hosts.¹ The ladies of the Netherlands, who, at Philip II.'s order, were chosen to wait upon the Infanta, took a short route to Milan. But the Archduke went out of his way in order to meet the Austrian Archduchess, who was to be the King of Spain's wife. At Augsburg he was lodged by the Fuggers, the great commercial family who were all-powerful in this free Imperial city. Passing thence through Bavaria into Bohemia, and avoiding Prague, where the plague was raging, after a short meeting with the Emperor Rudolf II., Albert arrived at Inns-

¹ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc A.," and Reiffenberg, "Itinéraire de l'Archiduc Albert."

bruck. There he visited the tomb of Maximilian I., erected over his remains by his grandsons, Charles V., and his brother, Ferdinand; a magnificent monument of the German Renaissance. Close to Innsbruck, towards Steinach, he also saw the bronze effigies of Charles V. and Ferdinand clasped in an embrace, erected to commemorate their meeting, Charles coming from Spain and Italy, Ferdinand from a victorious campaign in Hungary.

At Trent, on the confines of the Venetian territory, Albert met the future Queen of Spain and her mother. The Archduchess Margaret was about fourteen years of age; she was the daughter of Charles, Duke of Styria, the brother of the Emperor Maximilian II., the father of Philip III.'s mother. The journey through the Venetian territory was a triumphal progress, in which the Archduchess and Albert were escorted by the King of Spain's representatives, by the lords of the territories, and by Pope Clement VIII.'s nephew, the Cardinal Aldobrandini. The entry into Ferrara, where the marriages were to take place, was accompanied by all the pomp of the papal court and of Spain. Before the gates of the city the Archduchess and the Archduke were met by the Cardinal Aldobrandini, the Duke of Sessa, the King of Spain's Ambassador, and a train of cardinals and noblemen. Costly gifts were made in the name of the Pope and the King of Spain, and then a great procession approached the house of the Spanish Ambassador, where his Holiness was in waiting. There the future Queen of Spain, her mother and the Archduke, were admitted to kiss his foot.

On Sunday, November 15th, the court put off its

mourning, and the Pope in his pontificals, accompanied by all the cardinals, celebrated the double marriage. He first united the Archduchess Margaret and the Archduke Albert, who was the King of Spain's proxy; and then the Archduke Albert and the Duke of Sessa, Isabel's proxy. The service being complete, the Pope, according to custom, bestowed upon the newly-wedded Queen of Spain a golden rose, blessed by him. The more serious part of the wedding ceremonial was then ended, and the courts gave themselves up to enjoyment. A few days passed in festivities, and then the journey was resumed. But so many were the halts by the way, that it was February before the travellers reached Genoa. Many more weeks passed, as they slowly made their way along the Ligurian coast, and thence by Toulon and Marseilles to Spanish waters. In the last days of March the harbour of Vinaroz was reached; six months having been consumed in a journey which the Archduke's subjects had begged him to make with all speed.

The coming of the Queen redoubled the festivities of Philip III.'s court at Valencia. The King, who was young and romantically inclined, saw his bride for the first time at Murviedro, where she lodged with her mother; being "disguised as a private gentleman, bearing a crozier, and giving it out that he came from the King."¹ He was, however, recognized by the Queen's "camarera," who perhaps was not uninformed of the King's intention. Afterwards, when the two visited, they conversed through interpreters, neither knowing the language of the other.

No romantic masquerade signalized the meeting of

¹ Reiffenberg.

Isabel and her husband. They had perhaps both reached the age when romance ceases to be the presiding divinity of life. Isabel was herself, according to Spanish reckoning, no longer quite young. Latterly she had acquired the habit of laughingly rebuking those who congratulated her on her birthday ; declaring that her age was such that they would do better to dissemble than to celebrate it. She was still more than ordinarily handsome, and her face, as her portraits testify, was full of charm. But visitors in Madrid began to admit that her beauty, which had been the pride of the Spanish Court, was beginning to wane, and that her form had lost the slender proportions of youth.

But if masquerade was absent from the meeting of Albert and Isabel at Valencia, so also was the interpreter, who bore eloquent witness to the barrier which separated the young King and Queen. Isabel welcomed no stranger as her husband, but her kinsman, known to her from her earliest childhood. Had she been married to the young King of Portugal, to her uncle Anjou, or to the Duke of Guise, all of whom were at various times suggested, the union would have been in accordance with the custom of royal alliances, though opposed to all human feeling. Albert and Isabel had grown up amidst the same surroundings. He had come to her father's court, a boy of eleven, when she was almost a baby. He remained in Madrid, until Philip took him out into the world, to put into practice the lessons which he had taught him. Next to his own children, the King cherished the greatest affection for his nephew. He rated his abilities high. He made him his companion, initiated him into affairs of state, as he did the Infanta, and sent him forth as a trusted

emissary to rule his states. Isabel had, as they both grew up, learnt to know Albert well ; and to love him, as she loved all those who were admitted to her father's regard. It was, then, with no feelings of doubt and misgiving, such as must frequently agitate the royal bride, but animated by the happiest anticipation that Isabel awaited the coming of her husband.

The month following the arrival of the Queen and the Archduke was passed, at first in the observances fitting to the season of the year, the performance of stationary prayers and the washing of the feet of the poor ; later, after Easter week, in the enjoyment of bull-fights, masques and tourneys.¹ On April 18th, the two marriages, celebrated by proxy in Ferrara many months before, were confirmed at the Church of Serranos, near Valencia. The ceremony was marked by the customary Spanish splendour. The two brides and bridegrooms were very magnificently attired in white, the King wearing a short mulberry-coloured cloak richly embroidered in gold, and the Queen and the Infanta decked in blazing jewels. Drummers, kettle-drummers and flute-players, wearing either the King's livery of gold, white and red, or the Archduke's blue, conducted the glittering throng to and from the church. With all the gaiety and noisy enthusiasm which accompanied them, the marriage celebrations, in a sensitive mind like Isabel's, must have struck a note of sadness. As she knelt before the altar at Albert's side, while the stately Mass, intoned by the papal Nuncio and the Patriarch of Valencia, proceeded, the image of her father would rise before her, with a feeling of poignant sorrow that it had not been granted to him to witness the marriage, which he had so much

¹ "Relaciones historicas de los siglos xvi. y xvii."

desired, between the two beings whom, of all, he loved and trusted most. It was a time for prayer that, in the new life upon which she and her husband were entering, they might have strength to carry out the work entrusted to them.

Valencia exerted herself to do honour to her royal guests. Her noblest cavaliers made their nights gay with tourneys and military exercises; while in the daytime, the ladies entertained them with native dances. Ball followed banquet night after night, the King and Queen and the Archdukes (as Isabel and her husband were henceforth called) taking part until the early hours of the morning. At length came the time to depart for Barcelona, the port of embarkation. No haste was made, the journey being beguiled with visits to shrines and with entertainments on board the flagship of Prince John Andrew Doria, who accompanied them. The port of Barcelona was made on May 13th; and there the Pentecost season passed in a manner that surpassed even the pleasures of Valencia, a contemporary declaring that the gaieties in the streets at night eclipsed all experience.

Philip III. took the opportunity afforded by his presence in Barcelona to perform the ceremony of taking the oath to observe the customs and privileges of Catalonia. The representatives of the country at the same time took an oath of fealty and homage to the King.¹ Financial needs were not ignored; for the Cortes, who subsequently assembled, made, at the King's request, a grant of a million in gold, and an additional grant of a hundred thousand crowns. It was, however, not often that the relations of the Kings of Spain with

¹ Reiffenberg.

Catalonia were so amicable. On June 7th the rulers of the Netherlands, whose territories were awaiting them with such impatience, finally embarked from Barcelona. At eight o'clock at night, by bright moonlight, Prince Doria came to escort the Archdukes to the royal galley, which was adorned with brocade and cloth of gold. In a second galley, among many other nobles and gentlemen, was Don Balthasar de Zuñiga, the new Spanish ambassador to the Netherlands, whose office was a proof of the independence granted to these territories. At the first hour of the night the Archdukes left the harbour, amid the universal lamentations of the Spaniards ; who, down to the very children, grieved to see Isabel, the favourite child of their beloved King Philip the Prudent, leave their shores.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARCHDUKE ALBERT OF AUSTRIA

The career of the Archduke Albert in Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands—The journey of the Archdukes to the Netherlands

THE husband whom Philip II. had given to Isabel was, no less than his daughter, his pupil in statecraft. In manner, in tastes, and in the traits of his character he resembled Philip, perhaps more even than did Isabel; having become, by close observation of his master, almost typically Spanish.

The Archduke Albert of Austria was the sixth son of the Emperor Maximilian II., and his first cousin, Maria, Philip II.'s sister. From his youth he was destined for the Church; and was either by nature fitted for the career, or else the training of his earliest years was very successful in moulding his character. At the age of eleven, the Archduke passed from private hands to the light of court-life.¹ He was sent with his brother Wenceslaus to join their two elder brothers, the future Emperor Rudolf and the Archduke Ernest, at the court of Madrid.

There his serious disposition at once revealed itself. His piety and love of study delighted his tutors. All the hours which were not given to work were devoted to prayer, to which he would withdraw, while the other children with whom he was brought up, were amusing

¹ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc."

themselves with games and various recreations after their meals.¹ At sixteen he was an accomplished linguist, and would converse with the ambassadors who resided at Philip II.'s court in Latin, German, Spanish, Italian and French.

Philip, who recognized in his nephew a zealous worker after his own heart, in 1577 obtained for him a Cardinal's hat, with the title of Cardinal of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem.² At the same time he bestowed upon this boy of eighteen, the Archbishopric of Toledo, which brought with it a revenue of at least 300,000 ducats, and the title of Inquisitor-General. These offices Albert enjoyed until he renounced his vows. Malice whispered that even after he had ceased to be a priest he kept half the revenues of his archbishopric.³

Philip had still greater honours in store for his favourite nephew. When, in 1581, he set out to take possession of his newly-conquered kingdom of Portugal, Albert accompanied him. He travelled with the King from place to place, participating in all the ceremonies connected with Philip's installation in his new kingdom, receiving his initiation in the duties of the office of viceroy, which the King had no doubt already assigned to him.

The period of Albert's Portuguese viceroyalty showed him as a bold organizer and a zealous son of the Church. In his later years the papal Nuncio in Brussels, the Cardinal Bentivoglio, who had good opportunities of knowing him, attributed to him slowness and irresolution as his chief faults. These defects seem to have

¹ D'Orval, quoted by Blaes.

² The Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme was at Rome.

³ Potvin, "Albert et Isabelle, Fragments sur leur Règne."

overtaken him rather when brought face to face with abstract problems of administrative reform, than when opposing his enemies in war. In Portugal, at any rate, he acted swiftly and boldly when left to his own devices. Twice he had to face the supporters of the national claimant to the throne, Antonio, the Prior of O Crato. He had escaped to England, but finding Elizabeth more enthusiastic in her protestations than in effective support, wearied of her treatment, and finally fled to France. He found Catherine de' Medici readier with help. Two fleets in succession were fitted out in France, of which the latter was sent to hold the island of Terceira in the Azores, where the Pretender's faction was in the ascendency. But the viceroy speedily sent against them the Admiral Santa Cruz, who captured many of the Pretender's principal ships, put the rest to flight, and deprived Antonio of his last hold in Portuguese territory.

At this moment, after the defeat of the French, the Spanish fleet, or, at any rate, that portion of it which Santa Cruz directly commanded, was in splendid condition.¹ The Admiral asked to be allowed to undertake immediately the invasion of England, so often contemplated. The conquest of Portugal made the enterprise one of immediate possibility, for Philip now had, what he had long desired, a long Atlantic coast-line. But the King was not yet ready, and Santa Cruz's request was refused.

The orders for the sailing of the Great Armada found Albert no better prepared than the other officials of Philip's dominions. Demoralization seemed to have seized them all. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, on his

¹ Froude, "The Spanish Story of the Armada."

arrival in Lisbon, found confusion reigning. All possible pomp accompanied the ceremony of handing to the Duke a banner consecrated by the Pope, which was to be borne against the heretics. Albert, acting for the King, handed to the Duke in the Metropolitan Church in Lisbon, the standard bearing the royal arms of Spain, into which had been introduced as supporters the figure of Christ on the Cross and the Virgin mother. The scroll underneath bore the words "*exsurge Deus et vindica causam tuam.*"¹ But neither this stately ceremonial, nor prayers and fastings, could produce men, ammunition or supplies. The responsibility for this lay rather at Philip's door than at Albert's. Philip's plans, after endless procrastinations, were partially communicated to his officials, with instructions for their immediate execution. The terror inspired by Drake's raid in the preceding year, made recruiting exceedingly difficult; while lack of funds and the dishonesty of the victuallers hindered the provision of adequate supplies. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, who succeeded the splendid old sea-dog Santa Cruz, was not a commander to inspire confidence. Only a mania for manipulating all the strings of the enterprise from his own desk can have led Philip to insist on the services of the poor creature who shivered at the prospect of sea-sickness, and who so clearly set forth his own incompetence.

In the year following the destruction of the Armada, the Archduke showed that he was capable of prompt, strong action. With proper organization the attack of Drake and Norris, in favour of the Pretender, might have severely menaced and even overthrown Spanish

¹ Froude.

rule in Portugal.¹ The greater part of the people were disaffected, and had pledged themselves to rise on behalf of Don Antonio. Albert's swift action, whereby he established a terrorism in Lisbon, prevented all but a few priests and peasants from joining the English. As usual, the council in Madrid was paralysed. The Archduke's measures gave the government time to recover, and destroyed the power of the most dangerous English invasion of the Peninsula.

The Archduke's domestic government was, it appears, a prolonged attempt to make of Portugal an antechamber to Rome;² so much so that it has been said that his only political equipment lay in his obedience to the Church. With infinite zeal he collected relics of six Christian martyrs slain in Morocco, and of eleven tortured by the infidels in the kingdom of Fez. Of these he sent some to Madrid, and distributed the remainder among the churches of Portugal. In one of the periodic scholastic quarrels which raged between Jesuits and Jacobins the viceroy was strong in his support of the Jesuit Molina, "whose ethics, less severe and more supple, served the interests of the Papacy more faithfully than those of his adversary."³

In spite of his devotion to Rome, Albert's rule in Portugal was just and moderate, and animated by a desire for the public good. In 1595, the death of his brother, the Archduke Ernest, Philip's Governor in the Netherlands, called him to another sphere of action, in which his quality was to be more severely tested. He left Madrid in August, arriving in Brussels in February 1596, about a year after the death of Ernest.

Albert was received in the Netherlands with en-

¹ Martin Hume, "Philip II."

² Blaes.

³ Blaes.

thusiasm. In the midst of his troubles, the Archduke Ernest had summoned a council of ninety nobles, clergy and provincial governors, to propose measures for the improvement of the condition of the Netherlands. A report of this was despatched to Spain, and was well received by Philip. The King had agreed to the reforms which it embodied, and had himself suggested various measures which he ordered the Archduke to carry out. The Archduke Albert was regarded as the heir of his brother's policy, which had kindled a spark of hope in the suffering territory. Already public rumour designated him the saviour of the country; and men spoke of his goodness, his moderation, his love of justice and the public weal, his wisdom, and his prudence.

For the moment, Albert found work to his hand, in resisting two enemies, Maurice of Nassau and Henry IV. of France. Since the death of the Duke of Parma in 1592, Maurice of Nassau (who had followed his father as Captain-General of the forces of the United Provinces) had been gaining success after success. The provinces of Brabant and Flanders, a prey to his fierce incursions, and to the murderous raids of bands of robbers known as "Picaroons," were completely disorganized. The attacks of Henry IV. were directed against Hainault and Flanders, but with less success than attended Maurice. Fuentes, the interim Governor of the Netherlands, had been able to seize Doullens in Picardy, and several other frontier towns, and push on into French territory. This was the situation when Albert arrived in Brussels.

Philip II. had given him permission to seek a peace, truce or cessation of arms with the United Provinces, provided the dignity of the Crown did

not suffer, and the interests of religion were not jeopardized. Albert hoped for peace, and thought that he beheld the means to bring it about. He brought with him Philip William, Prince of Orange, the eldest son of William the Silent, who, twenty-eight years before, when a student at the university of Louvain, had been carried off to Spain, where he had since remained. Albert hoped that the return of the prince would open the way to peace, and urged his reception by the United Provinces. But the Estates-General had no love for the Spanish-bred prince, whom they looked upon as a renegade; Albert's overtures for peace were rudely repulsed, and the Prince of Orange advised to remain in Brussels.

Albert's first campaign against France brought a marked success. By a clever feint, which threatened to force the French to raise the siege of La Fère, on the Oise, he captured Calais; and subsequently gained possession of the towns of Ham, Guines and Ardres in Picardy. Although he was soon driven back across the frontier, and La Fère fell, the Archduke had inflicted a blow on French prestige, and in Calais he had made a capture from which Henry IV. was quite unable to dislodge the Spaniards.

Against the United Provinces, Albert was by no means so successful. The defeat of his troops near Turnhout in Brabant, and the loss of the Count of Varax, one of his foremost generals, left the army in disorder, and the Archduke financially exhausted. During the year which preceded the Peace of Vervins, Maurice of Nassau was making conquests in rapid succession. When, after the making of peace and the cession of the provinces to the Archduke and the



ARCHDUKE ALBERT OF AUSTRIA
Liechtenstein Collection

Infanta, Albert left for Madrid, Maurice was still advancing, while mutiny was spreading through the ranks of the Spanish and native armies.

The Archduke was in his fortieth year when he and the Infanta entered into their new possessions.¹ In appearance he was a German, with a fair skin and hair. He had a high forehead and a noble face, which was however somewhat marred by the prominent Habsburg lip. He was short and thin, and somewhat puny in appearance; a defect which was only concealed when he was on horseback. If his person was German, his manner was Spanish. He had acquired in Madrid a stiff and formal demeanour, and was unable to throw it off to suit the easier customs of other countries. He spoke little, and no shadow of his emotions ever crossed his impassive face.² According to one account, he never laughed, "*même lorsqu'il était le plus gai.*" Yet withal he was gentle and kind-hearted. But the self-suppression which his training inculcated, and which he saw before him in Philip II., had led him to adopt, perhaps unconsciously, his model's mask-like exterior.

This was not the case with the Infanta, though her companionship with her father had been closer than had her husband's. The influence of his training was indeed deep and lasting. Her devotion to the Catholic religion was as great as that of the Archduke, and the practice of piety occupied a great place in her life. But she could be very human; she knew how to win popularity. In spite of her almost cloistered existence in Spain, Isabel was capable of enjoying life. In middle-age she enjoyed robust health,³ and liked to show her-

¹ Bentivoglio.

² Potvin.

³ Bentivoglio.

self at national festivities. An adept at sports of every kind, she thought it no derogation from her dignity to take part in the old-established contests of her subjects.

Isabel's capacity for enjoyment had full play in the journey from Spain to her new territories. All was so fresh, so full of promise. And it was with a trembling eagerness that was almost childlike, that she set out into the world, which imagination had filled with adventures and joys as yet unknown.

Notwithstanding her thirty-two years, this was her first experience of travel outside the peninsula. As a child she had accompanied her father to Badajoz on the frontier of Portugal; later, on the progress with which her sister's marriage was celebrated, she had gained her first impression of the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia. Now as a sovereign princess, journeying to her dominions, she passed for the first time through foreign territories, magnificently feasted by all her hosts, amid manifestations of goodwill and respect on all hands. In a letter, written soon after her arrival in Brussels, to her brother's adviser, the Marquis of Denia, upon whom the dukedom of Lerma had just been bestowed, the Infanta gives expression to her enjoyment of the many varied experiences of her journey.¹ The comparative monotony of her life in Spain, hedged in by the splendid etiquette of the court, and the endless routine of her father's work, seems not to have blunted her senses to pleasure, but rather to have whetted her appetite. Meeting with new friends especially delighted her, and she expected in them an equal pleasure in her company. "You cannot imagine how pleased we

¹ Villa, "Correspondencia de la Infanta Doña Isabel," etc., Appendix V. pp. 318-338.

were to meet" is an expression which frequently occurs.

Scarcely had the Archdukes left Milan (on July 22nd, 1599), where many days had been spent in the accustomed pleasures of the city, in masques, comedies and tourneys, when they found themselves in the mountains, and within sight of the great Italian lakes. Within a few days the road grew so bad that mules took the place of horses, and henceforth formed their only beasts of burden. Before the Swiss territory was reached, the Infanta was obliged to abandon her coach, and to continue her journey either riding or in a litter or chair.

The hospitable Swiss sent ambassadors to meet the travellers on their entrance into the territory, and at each canton the courtesy was repeated, and the cavalcade was conducted to the confines of the next canton. Nor did they come empty-handed. The ambassadors were accompanied by thirty or forty of their countrymen, each carrying in either hand a bottle of wine, which was deposited on the ground in such a way that Isabel and her husband were surrounded by bottles. The quaintness of the custom, which was accompanied by speeches in German of great length, filled the Infanta with mirth; but the kindliness of the mountain-folk could not but please her.

The way from Bellinzona lay through the beautiful Ticino valleys, and thence over the St Gotthard pass, down the valley of the Reuss through the Forest Canton of Uri. The ascent of the St Gotthard did not, in the summer weather, seem very formidable; and was made by many of the cavalcade in rather primitive chairs, improvised from four poles with a piece of canvas for a seat, whereon the traveller sat with his legs dangling.

The Infanta, being on horseback, had time to gather some of the flowers and plants for which the St Gotthard pass was famous. She described in a way which reveals her love of nature the beauty of the trees and flowers, and the splendid mountain scenery through which they passed. Occasionally she displayed an extraordinary naïveté. She wondered whether the giant peak, that glittered so in the sun, was really made of emerald, as the people said ; and declared that had her stay been of longer duration, she would have tried to shoot a piece off with a battery, an attempt which the natives assured her they had often made. Down the Reuss valley, over the Devil's Bridge, underneath which the river fell with a deafening roar ; shivering in the wind, which even in summer drives with great force down the gorge, they made their way to Altdorf, the capital of the canton of Uri. Altdorf was the traditional scene of the exploits of the legendary hero William Tell ; and it was there in the market-place that the equally legendary bailiff Gessler is said to have hoisted the Habsburg hat. The Archdukes, however, met with nothing but kindness from this, the first of the cantons which had bidden defiance to their ancestors. Presents of wine, corn and fat oxen were offered them. The same welcome was accorded them at Lucerne, whither they went across the lake. The Infanta was charmed at the sight of the little villages along the banks ; and especially with one hamlet consisting of not more than ten or a dozen houses, and some pasture-land, which she learnt had existed as a republic for more than a thousand years.

The Archdukes soon left the glorious mountain scenery, and entered the flat, rich country of South Germany, where new pleasures awaited them. They passed

through populous towns, and were feasted by powerful governors and princes. At Basle, where a charger was given to the Archduke, a present of wine came to the Infanta, "because I am such a drinker," she said. They were magnificently entertained, and enjoyed every kind of hunting. On one occasion even, at Colmar, they were lodged by a heretic. The Infanta, grieved at the thought of her host's condition, did what she could to convert his sons. They were such charming little creatures, that she yearned to save them from the fate which she felt was threatening them.

The last territory through which the Archdukes passed before entering the Netherlands was the Duchy of Lorraine. They had purposed to travel through the Burgundian territory, but the news which came from Brussels obliged them to take the shortest route. The duke and his family were new acquaintances, and Isabel found much to interest and delight her. The duke was handsome and pleasant, and the Infanta found him younger than his sons. His palace at Nancy was filled with pictures and tapestries, which Isabel could appreciate, accustomed as she was to the society of artists, who thronged from the countries of Europe to the court of Philip II., the great patron of art of his day. But she derived the greatest amusement from the sight of the enormous hoops affected by the ladies of Lorraine. On one occasion, when the Infanta and her hostess were forming a procession of ladies, they remained struggling amid a confused mass of "those devilish farthingales" for more than an hour; while the Infanta, and those ladies who were without these powerful defences, were almost "squeezed out of shape" by their hooped sisters. Each had three attend-

ants to help her to move her skirt about, and when they sat at a meal two men held the farthingales over the arms of the chair. When they danced they looked like hobby-horses, and the sight of them was too great a strain on the Infanta's gravity.

The Archdukes were now hastening their journey to their territories, in obedience to the urgent summons of the deputy-governor, Albert's brother, the Cardinal-Archduke Andrew. On August 20th they entered Thionville in Luxemburg, on the frontier of the provinces. They now began to traverse roads full of people, who threw flowers into their coach and strewed grasses in their path, with shouts of "Long live the Dukes of Brabant." Old men and women wept with joy, and the crowds pressed forward to get near enough to touch the coach and horses. Thus the Archdukes passed through the towns of Luxemburg to Namur, penetrating the dense forests of the Ardennes, where, for fear of bands of robbers and predatory French troops, the country people furnished a guard of double strength.

At Namur, the Count of Berlaymont, the Governor of the province, had prepared a splendid welcome. In the streets, the arches formed of interlacing branches seemed like a sky of green leaves, beneath which the cavalcade passed. Two days were spent in visiting churches, in watching jousts ; and then the journey was continued.

The Archdukes were rapidly approaching their capital ; and on the road and at Nivelles and Hal, through which they passed, they were continually met by envoys from Brussels. First came the deputies of the province of Brabant, the powerful Duke of Arschoot, the Governor, the Archbishop of Malines, the Primate

of the Netherlands, and many members of the three estates. The Infanta also received visits, during the last days before her entry to Brussels, from the mothers, wives and daughters of the chief gentlemen of the court. At Hal she and her husband bade farewell to the Archduke Andrew, who resigned his office as Albert's deputy. Isabel found him very fat, and unlike any of his kinsmen. On Sunday, September 5th, 1599, the Archdukes, having spent the previous night at the cloister of La Cambre, made their state entry into Brussels.

The Infanta, in her letter to the Duke of Lerma, described the entry into Brussels with great minuteness. Elsewhere we read of the splendour of Albert's and Isabel's array, and that the jewels adorning the Infanta's saddle were alone worth 200,000 florins.¹ To the Infanta their entry symbolized the peace which their reign was to bring to the provinces. She and the Archduke were mounted upon white horses,² to fulfil an ancient prophecy, which declared that peace should not come to the Netherlands until two proprietary lords should enter Brussels riding on white horses—a prophecy in which the people seem to have placed great faith.

The ceremony began outside the city gates, whither the Archdukes were accompanied by a gay throng of burgesses, and the chiefs of the city military guilds. There many courtesies passed. The Infanta, through Richardot, the President of the Privy Council, expressed her confidence in her subjects; in token whereof she restored to the magistrates the staff of justice and the city keys, which they had resigned into her

¹ Potvin, "Albert et Isabel, Fragments."

² Infanta to Lerma. Villa, "Correspondencia," Appendix V. p. 335.

hand. A procession was then formed and entered the city.

First came the companies of burghers, then arquebusiers on horseback. These were followed by the city magistrates; behind whom came the royal trumpeters and drummers, followed by the pages and cavaliers, in rank ascending to the mayordomos, the Grandees of Spain and the ambassadors. Behind these walked the four Kings-at-arms, followed by the Count of Sora, who bore the sword of state immediately in front of the Archdukes.

The royal standard was carried immediately behind the Archdukes, halberdiers and archers following. The Countess of Chassencourt, the Infanta's chief lady-in-waiting, together with the Countess of Uceda and the Countess of Bucquoy, the latter one of the Netherlandish ladies chosen by the Archduke to attend the Infanta, headed a troop of ladies, each escorted by two cavaliers, who were followed by the gentlemen of the Archduke's household. Companies of archers and lancers, escorting a procession of the coaches of the Infanta and her ladies, brought up the rear.

The procession made its way to the cathedral of Sainte Gudule, where it was met by the Archbishop of Malines and all the clergy and Orders, and all entered for prayer. The rain which had fallen since the early morning, now ceased; which the Infanta ascribed to the efficacy of prayer, "so acceptable to Our Lord that it seemed as if heaven had come down, for immediately the rain ceased."¹

The rest of the journey was accomplished in sunshine, through streets gaily decorated, and thronged with

¹ Letter to Lerma, p. 337.

sightseers to the fourth and fifth stories of the houses. Even at the Palace, which was reached at nightfall, the ceremony was not yet ended. For at their antechamber the Archdukes were met by the members of their Councils; and the President of the Privy Council, Richardot, in their name, delivered an address. And there, as Isabel wrote, "ended the holiday-making and our journey." It had probably been the happiest time of her life. Everything was new to her, and everywhere she found something to amuse and interest her.

Henceforth her life was passed in less happy surroundings. She was never again so free from care, nor had she leisure to indulge her tastes. She and her husband had a great task to accomplish; they must restore peace and prosperity to their territories, which had been exhausted by thirty years of almost ceaseless war.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARCHDUKES, SOVEREIGNS OF THE NETHERLANDS

The inauguration of the government of the Archdukes—The “Edit Perpétuel” of the “Joyeuse Entrée”—The meeting of the Estates-General of 1600—Relations with Henry IV. of France; with England—The conference at Boulogne—Home affairs—The campaign of 1598—Mutiny at Antwerp and elsewhere—Maurice of Nassau takes the offensive—The plan of campaign for 1600—Maurice in Flanders before Nieuport—Albert and Isabel at Ghent—The battles of Leffingen and of Nieuport—The victory of Maurice and the failure of the plan of campaign—The importance of the victory of the United Provinces

THE first care of the Archdukes on their arrival in Brussels was the organization of the government. The loyalty of the native nobility in the recent struggle with the revolted Northern Provinces called for reward. Three additions were made to the Council of State, the Duke of Arschot, the Prince of Orange (Philip William) and the Count of Aremberg.¹ The Count of Berlaymont was promoted to the government of Artois, and the Count of Egmont to the government of Namur, which he vacated. Further, the Marquis of Havré became chief of the Council of Finances, and the Count of Aremberg Admiral of the Fleet. The Prince of Orange and the Count of Ligne had already in Spain received

¹ Reiffenberg.

the honour of the Golden Fleece. Now the Duke of Arschot, the Marquis of Havré, the Count of Egmont, and the Counts of Solre and of Champlite became knights of the Order. These men represented the greatest and most powerful families in the Netherlands, and their support was of great value to the new government.

Having thus rewarded their nobility, the Archdukes prepared to give satisfaction to the provinces. In August 1598, at the time when the acts of cession were ratified, the Archduke Albert and the three Estates of Brabant had sworn to the "Joyeuse Entrée." This oath Isabel and her husband now affirmed. The Archdukes, in accordance with an ancient custom, swore to observe the "Edit perpétuel," the charter of privileges granted to the Flemings by their lords in past ages. But on this occasion, the oath which the Archdukes took was not observed.¹ One clause of the "Edit perpétuel" of the "Joyeuse Entrée" provided for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the castle of Antwerp and from all other fortresses and cities. But on the pretext of the danger of invasion, which was indeed a very real one, the Spaniards and Italians remained, and the oath sworn came to nothing.

The ceremony of the inauguration began in Brabant. At Louvain, the "Joyeuse Entrée" was read in the Flemish language, and the Archdukes took the oath to observe it. They subsequently visited the university; and heard a discourse in Latin delivered by the famed Justus Lipsius, the professor of history, on the duty of a prince to rule his people well.² This was followed by a play acted by the undergraduates before the court,

¹ Campan, "Abrégé historique du Règne d'Albert et Isabelle."

² Reiffenberg, "Itinéraire de l'Archiduc Albert."

dealing with the condition and the causes of the war, and expressing the hope that the advent of the Archdukes would bring a speedy peace. The inauguration was repeated in Brussels; and throughout the winter, in spite of the extreme cold, the Archdukes travelled through the provinces, taking part in a similar ceremony in each. Flanders, Artois and Hainault, and even the outlying Cambrésis and the seignories of Lille, Douai and Orchies were visited in this way. Only in the County of Namur, and in the Duchies of Luxemburg and Gueldres was the inauguration postponed.

For ceremonies soon gave place to questions of grave importance which, from the time of their arrival, absorbed the Archdukes. Not the least of their troubles was the meeting of the Estates-General, the necessity for which filled them with anxiety. Albert and Isabel inherited from Philip II. a distrust of large assemblies, more especially when its members were in the habit of referring the subjects under discussion to the provinces of which they were the deputies. Philip II. had an aversion to summoning the Estates-General in the provinces. In the early years of his reign he had been forced to it; but under the governorship of Parma and of the Archduke Ernest, they had not once met. When, however, Philip decided upon so momentous a matter as the cession of the Netherlands to his daughter, it seemed to him that the gift could not take effect unless the provinces gave their consent, if only as a formality. The estates which ratified the cession also lodged their protest against the Archduke's departure for Spain, and demanded that on his return they might be convoked to advise on the reform both of justice and police, and generally on all matters

which might concern the service of the princes, as well as the preservation, well-being and repose of the country.¹

It was in accordance with his answer to the Estates of 1598 that Albert proceeded early in 1600 to summon them once more. That he felt some qualms may be seen from a letter which he addressed from Milan to the Council of State in Brussels, asking whether the summons was really necessary. The reply was that though it was not essential, it would be for the "service of the Archdukes and for the good of the country." Albert, moved perhaps as much by the consideration of the condition of the Netherlands, and the need of financial aid, as by the memory of his promise to the Estates, summoned them to assemble in April 1600.

During Albert's absence the internal condition of the Netherlands had grown rapidly worse, while the relations with foreign powers were improving. The Archduke Andrew, who ruled in Albert's absence, set himself, as a preliminary to restoring order in the suffering provinces, to secure them from aggression from abroad. With the Peace of Vervins hostilities on the part of France had not altogether ceased. Henry IV. had refused to break off his relations with the Dutch, and France provided a recruiting-ground for levies for the revolted provinces. Moreover, the provinces which lay nearest to France were not secure from raids carried across the frontier. The Archduke Andrew sent an envoy to France to protest, and he, with Tassis, Philip III.'s minister in Paris, obtained redress.

In June 1599 Henry IV. issued an edict recalling from Holland the Sieur de la Noue, the leader, and all

¹ Gachard, "Actes des Etats Généraux de 1600," Introduction.

others who had taken service with the Dutch. He still refused to break off his diplomatic relations with the United Provinces ; yet he gave evidence of a wish to observe the peace. Some French troops, garrisoned in Metz, had made an attack, which, however, proved unsuccessful, on Charlemont, in the Netherlands. Henry IV. ordered the culprits to be punished, and sent his resident in Brussels to express his apology to the Archdukes. Moreover, he proposed that the points left unsettled by the treaty of Vervins should be decided by a conference. Thus, though the Netherlands could hardly count on French neutrality in their difficulties with the Dutch, they seemed at any rate secure from open hostility.

The Archduke Andrew also strove, but with no great measure of success, to bring about peace with England. The ceaseless hostility between England and Spain had been, to a great extent, the cause of Spain's misfortunes in the Netherlands. For it was to cripple Philip that Elizabeth had given the continual help to the United Provinces, which enabled them to carry on the struggle against Spain. Moreover, English sailors had lost no opportunity to damage Flemish shipping and commerce, and had succeeded in doing incalculable mischief.

Peace seemed an immediate necessity, and the death of Philip II. appeared to afford a fitting occasion to begin negotiations. In January 1599 Andrew's agent, Jerome Coomans, appeared in London and was well received by the Queen. There was indeed a large party in England, led by Robert Cecil, which strongly favoured an alliance with the Archdukes in Flanders and a policy of peace with Spain. This party now contained most of the English Catholics, except the

Jesuit faction, and was ready to accept a mild Catholic supremacy, or an Anglican government which would grant toleration to Catholics. Ceeil was, however, obliged to work in the dark, for fear of the Earl of Essex and the extreme Puritan party, who discountenanced any overtures to Spain, or an intermediary of Spain, and advocated open war.

The Archduke Andrew's difficulty lay in the fact that Albert and Isabel would contemplate no scheme of peace which did not include Spain; while Elizabeth openly expressed her distrust of Philip III.'s intentions. The wild bombast of the King and the Duke of Lerma might well pass for the true spirit of war, where their characters and the condition of Spain were not known. Philip III. was indeed contemplating the attack which England feared.¹ The death of Philip II. had roused the hopes of the irreconcilable English Catholics; and their appeal to Philip III. to support the Infanta's claim in arms, was not made in vain. In July 1599 Martin de Padilla, the Adelantado, was collecting in Lisbon and in the ports of Galicia, the most formidable fleet which had appeared since the Great Armada. On paper it was a magnificent array, actually it was useless. Spain was in a condition of plague and famine, and neither seaworthy ships, nor men, could be supplied. Yet the news of the Spanish preparations, exaggerated by the war-party, caused a panic in England. The condition of Spain was not known. The rumour spread that the Spaniards had landed in the Isle of Wight. The London trained bands were called out, and the English troops serving in Holland were recalled.

Soon after Albert and Isabel arrived in the Nether-

¹ Hume, "C. M. H.," III. p. 530.

lands, it was known that the Adelantado had only been able to put out to defend the Canary Islands against the Dutch, and that no blow could be struck at England. The Archdukes were anxious to proceed with the negotiations. In England the war-party was losing ground owing to the disgrace of Essex. In the early months of 1600, after long discussions, it was at length decided that a conference should be held at Boulogne. In the meantime Sir Thomas Edmondes arrived in Brussels from England. The Archdukes sent their principal secretary of state, Louis Verreyken, to London, for a preliminary discussion of essential points; and May 16th was appointed for the opening of the conference at Boulogne.

Thus abroad the prospect of the Netherlands seemed hopeful; within it was dark almost to despair. The army, instead of providing for their defence, was proving their greatest oppression and danger. In 1598, when Albert left for Madrid, Francesco de Mendoza, Marquis of Guadaleste, the Admiral of Aragon, was left in charge of the army. He was ordered to gain a passage over the Rhine, as a means of penetrating into the heart of the United Provinces; or, if that proved impossible, to enter the neighbouring territories and winter there. Making Cleves his headquarters, the Admiral soon seized Rheinberg, Wesel, Rees, and finally Emmerich, the largest town in the Duchy of Cleves. During this campaign the troops, who lacked money and supplies, pillaged and ravaged the lands of friends and foes alike. In the county of Berg, they seized upon the Count of Falckenstein, who had shut himself up in his castle, and despairing of wresting his treasures from him, they murdered his followers before

his eyes, then dragged him from his refuge, and butchered him.

When the Admiral of Aragon broke up his camp for the winter, he left his troops in Cleves and Westphalia. Their disorders and excesses drew complaints from the Princes of the Empire, belonging to the circle of Westphalia, especially from the Duke of Cleves. The Emperor Rudolf moreover issued a manifesto, ordering the Spanish army to evacuate Imperial territory within forty-eight hours, on pain of being put under the ban of the Empire.¹ As the Archduke Andrew did not comply, an army of the German Princes entered Cleves. It was however unable to effect anything, in spite of the fact that the garrison at Rheinberg had mutinied against Spanish authority ; and was forced to an ignominious retreat.

Thus the advantages of the campaign of 1599 on the Spanish side were reduced to the construction of Fort St André on the Isle of Bommel. It dominated the passage of the river Waal, and facilitated the means of penetrating into Holland. The effect of this was to a great extent ruined by the construction of a similar fort by the enemy on the opposite bank of the river, and by the making of a canal which allowed the Dutch to go up and down the Waal unmolested by the garrison at St André. By the time that Albert arrived, Rees and the other places in the Duchy of Cleves had been abandoned, in order to check the complaints of the Emperor and the Princes of the Empire.

Far more disastrous for the Netherlands than these losses was the mutiny which was spreading among the troops of all nations. Among the Spanish armies,

¹ Gachard, "Actes des Etats-Généraux de 1600," Introduction.

mutinies were traditional. Alba, with all his discipline, could not prevent them; and even Parma, whom the soldiers adored, witnessed more than one military revolt. The fact was, that the troops were badly paid, and often lacked the necessaries of life. The Netherlands themselves were so exhausted that they could not supply them. The 250,000 crowns a month which latterly constituted Philip II.'s ordinary provision for the Netherlands were insufficient, and were moreover not regularly sent; while even Philip III.'s extraordinary grant of 300,000 crowns was soon absorbed without bringing perceptible relief.

Already before the Archduke Albert left Brussels, the garrison of 600 men at the castle of Antwerp were in revolt (August 8th). According to their wont, the troops chose an "electo," a leader, and proceeded to fire a 25 lb. cannon-ball into the town-hall, where the town council were sitting.¹ The magistrates hastened to treat; and the troops, to whom nearly two years' pay was owing, demanded money and provisions for their daily upkeep. In the midst of the negotiations which followed, the Archduke left for Spain. The demands of the mutineers were continually raised. They began to levy forced contributions from the towns and villages around them; and the foreign merchants, who largely financed the government, prepared in the general panic to leave the city. The Archduke thereupon sent the Marquis of Havré to Antwerp to treat. With great difficulty, and after innumerable conferences with the magistrates, the burghers, the Portuguese and Genoese consuls, and the Lombards and other merchants, the Archduke managed to secure a loan of 400,000

¹ Gachard, "*Actes des Etats-Généraux de 1600*," Introduction.

florins, which he himself and the Estates of Brabant were called upon to guarantee. The mutineers obtained their pay and a promise of pardon, and left the castle on February 10th, 1599, after the mutiny had lasted six months. The garrisons of Ghent, and of Lier in Brabant, soon followed the example of Antwerp and yielded. But the close of 1599 saw the outbreak of fresh excesses. The garrison at Rheinberg had mutinied during Mendoza's campaign in Cleves. At the end of December he broke up his camp without being able to pay his troops. Twelve hundred men of all nationalities mutinied, and, placing an "electo" at their head, seized Weerdt in the north of the Archbishopric of Liège. They next flung themselves on Hamont in the same territory; and soon the Germans and Walloons at Forts St André and Crèveceur in Brabant, on the confines of Dutch and Flemish territory, were in revolt, while other garrisons threatened to follow.

Albert was anxious to chastise the mutineers at Hamont, and soon collected 2000 Burgundians, and 2000 German and Walloon forces. But the troops showed very little inclination for the work, and the officers themselves dissuaded him; and Albert was persuaded to treat with the rebels. They were given the town of Diest in Brabant as a residence until their arrears of pay were discharged, with a sufficient sum for present maintenance. They immediately began to levy contributions on the country round, exercising a kind of terrorism. Hamont, which they had quitted, was seized by some Italian mutineers, and the same trouble began over again.¹

Whilst the Archdukes were struggling with this

¹ Gachard, "Actes des Etats-Généraux," and Campan, "Abrégé historique."

hydra-headed foe, an attack from without threatened them. During 1599 Maurice of Nassau had been beset by financial difficulties in the Northern Provinces, and had maintained a defensive attitude. During the early months of 1600 he took advantage of the extreme cold, which froze all the rivers, took Wachtendonck in Gueldres, and Fort Crèvecoeur, and attacked Fort St André. St André, in spite of having mutinied, made a fine defence, hoping for relief from the Spaniard, Don Luis de Velasco. As he made no effort to assist them, the garrison, in despair, lacking bread, clothing and money, delivered the fort to Maurice for 125,000 florins; and on a promise of payment of the arrears of their wages, took service with the United Provinces.

During all these months, Albert and Isabel allowed few days to pass without sending an appeal to Spain for the provisions, so badly needed, so tardy in their appearance.¹ They also begged that the peace with England might be speedily settled. Yet no supplies appeared from Spain until March 1600, and a month later Fernando Carillo arrived in Flanders as the representative of Spain at the conference at Boulogne.²

As the summer of 1600 approached, the United Provinces determined to assume the offensive. The difficulties of the Archdukes, who seemed to be struggling helplessly against mutiny, and the obvious incapacity of Spain to afford them adequate assistance, seemed to offer the Dutch a good opportunity for striking a decisive blow.

The plan of campaign was to invade Flanders and

¹ Navarrette, "Coleccion de documentos ineditos," vol. xlii. pp. 312, 316, etc.

² Villa, "Correspondencia de la Infanta," pp. 4 and 10-14.

capture Dunkirk, the harbour of the pirates who had wrought such great damage to Dutch shipping and commerce. With this object, Maurice was to go by sea to Ostend, the sole remaining possession of the United Provinces in Flanders.¹ From there he was to advance to capture Nieuport, and thence redeem Dunkirk. Possibly the hope was entertained, that with Dunkirk as well as Ostend in their possession, the United Provinces might conquer Flanders.

Such was the scheme urged by the Estates-General, and especially by John van Olden-Barneveldt, who practically controlled the assembly. It was disapproved by Maurice, by his cousin Lewis William, Stadtholder of Friesland, by Sir Francis Vere, in command of the English troops, and in fact by all the experienced military commanders. They considered the plan too venturesome, and dwelt upon the risk of leaving the United Provinces unprotected. Maurice finally yielded to the Estates-General, insisting however that some of their number should take up their position at Ostend, in order to share the responsibility of a campaign which they had themselves instituted.

From the first the expedition was unfortunate. The fleet, under the command of Ernest Casimir of Nassau, another of Maurice's cousins, embarked at Rammeken in the island of Walcheren, with Ostend as its objective. The ships were however driven by a contrary wind to land at Sas de Ghent, on the coast of Flanders, opposite Walcheren; whence the troops prepared to march by land to Nieuport. Forts Philip and Assenede were quickly seized; and on June 27th, Maurice, who had joined Ernest after trying in vain to get a grip on Bruges

¹ Motley, "United Netherlands," vol. iv. ch. xxxviii.

and Ghent, took the dominating fort of Oudenburg. Thence he sent forward men to clear the forts between Ostend and Nieuport, and on July 1st he appeared before Nieuport and invested it.¹

In the meantime, the Archdukes were striving by promises to win over the mutineers. Those at Diest yielded first, on condition that they should serve under their own officers, and should be placed in the van in the coming encounters. The example spread. Other mutineers came in ; and with extraordinary rapidity the Archdukes collected a seasoned army of some 11,000 foot and 1500 horse. On June 28th they left Brussels, having received the thanks of the Estates-General for their untiring labours. The following day, in a field near their headquarters at Ghent, the troops were reviewed. The Infanta, "a second Agrippina," thrilling with the prospect of battle, rode from troop to troop, striving to animate her men by a rousing harangue. She declared that no army ever had a juster cause ; and assured them that beyond the certain recompense which they would reap for the service to God, a great reward awaited them from herself, the Archduke, and from the King of Spain.² She urged them to feel no fears about their pay, declaring that if all else failed, she would pawn her jewels rather than that they would suffer loss.

Leaving the Infanta at Ghent, the Archduke Albert pressed forward towards the coast. His appearance was wholly unexpected, and on July 1st, when he appeared before Oudenburg, he was able to seize it without resistance. By this capture, he cut off the Dutch communications with Ostend and with the United Provinces.

¹ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc A.," Cologne, 1693.

² Bentivoglio, Part III. Book VI. pp. 142 *seq.*

When he learned that the Archduke was advancing, Maurice, whose troops lay on the marshy ground round the harbour of Nieuport, sent forward his cousin Ernest to hold a bridge, which he had thrown over a stream a few miles to the north, at Leffingen. He hoped in this way to gain time to extricate his forces from their dangerous position. When Ernest arrived at the bridge, he found the Archduke already in possession of it. He had with him 2000 infantry, mostly Scots and Zeelanders, and four squadrons of Dutch cavalry. But at the first attack, his cavalry broke and fled; and the infantry, infected by the panic, threw away their arms and followed them, and were pursued to the walls of Ostend. In this way, some thousand of Ernest's men were either killed or drowned, while the Spaniards hardly lost a man.

The Archduke sent news of his success to Isabel, and for a moment appeared inclined to stay for the reinforcements which Don Luis de Velasco was bringing from Gueldres. But at the appearance of sails, which seemed to indicate that the enemy were escaping by sea from Nieuport to Ostend, he decided to hasten on.

Maurice had in the meantime led his troops from the low marshy ground where they lay, and had drawn them up in line of battle on the downs, which lie along the sea-coast of Flanders. The van was held by Sir Francis Vere, in charge of English and Frisians, and upon them fell the brunt of the battle. The engagement began on July 2nd. Maurice first discharged his artillery on Albert's horse, and followed it by a charge of cavalry, under the command of his youngest cousin, Lewis Gunther of Nassau. This was successful, and forced the Archduke's cavalry to retreat. The Spanish infantry, however, made a stand; and advancing, fell

upon the English and Frisians. For three hours the battle raged backward and forward along the downs, the advantage being now with the Spaniards, now with the English and Frisians, according to the nature of the ground.¹ Finally the latter were forced to give way. An attempt to relieve them, by a cavalry charge, failed, and the troops of the United Provinces began to scatter. At this moment, the Archduke, who had been in the thickest of the fight all day, ordered up his reserves, and in spite of the valour of Sir Francis Vere, who had been twice wounded, the army of the United Provinces seemed lost in a confused flight. Maurice now made a last effort to rally his men. The Archduke's men were completely worn out by their two engagements in one day. When Maurice, in a pause of exhaustion, hurled upon the Spanish flank some squadrons of cavalry which he had held in reserve, they could offer no resistance, and fled in headlong confusion.

The Archduke himself, who had risked his person with reckless courage, and received more than one wound, with difficulty escaped to Bruges. His losses, at the lowest estimate, were 3000 killed and 700 taken prisoner; among them Mendoza, the Admiral of Aragon. Over 100 standards were captured. The Archduke's beautiful white horse fell into the hands of Lewis Gunther of Nassau, and was presented by him to Maurice; while a white hackney belonging to the Infanta was also taken, and became the property of Count Ernest.

On his side, Maurice had suffered not a little, though perhaps his losses were not quite as heavy as were the Archduke's. The victory was a barren one. Maurice had

¹ Account of a "Battaile fought between Count Maurice and Albertus the Archduke, by a Gentleman employed in the said service," London, 1600.



ISABEL CLARA EUGENIA

RUBENS

From an engraving in the British Museum

been forced, by the Archduke's advance, to raise the siege of Nieuport; it had since received reinforcements, which made a second attempt impossible; therefore, after a little skirmishing, he returned home. The thirteen deputies of the Estates-General, who had gathered at Ostend in order to enjoy a great triumph, had already left for the Hague. They had witnessed the complete failure of their plan.

At Ghent Isabel received her husband "with masculine courage,"¹ as she had received all the reports from the battlefield—that he was dead, wounded, a prisoner. She grieved bitterly at the disgrace of defeat; yet she rejoiced at the great personal valour which her husband had displayed.² His wounds were sword-cuts, not gunshots, showing that he had fought at close quarters. She considered that a great opportunity for striking a heavy blow at their enemies had been lost, owing to lack of supplies, and did not cease to importune the Duke of Lerma to satisfy their needs punctually.

Bravely as the Archduke had fought, capable as he had shown himself throughout the campaign as a military organizer, the glory of the day remained with Maurice. Though the plan so carefully laid by the Estates-General failed, and though the immediate fruits of the battle were small, it was a great triumph for Maurice and his troops. For the first time in the long struggle the forces of the United Provinces had stood successfully against the Spaniards in a battle fought in the open. Maurice and the Englishman Sir Francis Vere, whose advanced guard of English and Frisians formed nearly half the whole army, had shown that even the renowned Spanish infantry was not invincible in the field.

¹ Bentivoglio.

² Villa, "Correspondencia," July 12th, 1600, to Lerma.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE DUTCH

The Estates-General of 1600—Their importance—Their difficulties—Attempt at a peace with the United Provinces—Disputes concerning ways and means with the Archdukes—The negotiations for peace between Spain and England—The conference at Boulogne ; its futility—The siege of Ostend—Importance of the place—The siege becomes essentially the war—Difficulties of the siege—Isabel's determination not to relinquish it—Isabel in camp—Troubles in Brabant—Ill-will against the Archdukes—The mutineers—Ambrose Spinola—Maurice captures Sluys—The surrender of Ostend

WHILE in Flanders war was raging, in Brussels the Estates-General pursued their deliberations.¹ They met on April 28th ; and at the opening sitting the President of the Privy Council, Richardot, who acted as the Archdukes' spokesman, expressed their concern at the condition of the country, and their hope that the Estates would discuss the question of peace, for which they were very much inclined. The Infanta, who had no greater love for parliamentary government than her husband, heartily wished the Estates at an end,² considering them a hindrance to the conduct of affairs. Indeed, for several weeks after their assembling, they were occupied in quarrels between the various states on

¹ Gachard, "Actes des Etats-Généraux de 1600."

² Villa "Correspondencia," May 28th, 1600.

questions of precedence, and showed no sense of their corporate responsibilities.

Before they consented to discuss the proposal of the Archdukes, the Assembly insisted on a decision with regard to the Diest mutineers. After some difficulty the Archdukes agreed that the sums which the mutineers demanded should be advanced to them under the title of arrears of pay. Permission was further given to the country people to punish the soldiery should they begin their depredations again, after their arrears had been paid. This business despatched, the Estates turned to the question of peace, and asked for authority to begin negotiations with the United Provinces. This was not the first time that an assembly in Brussels had treated with the revolted provinces apart from their rulers. In 1598 the Estates-General had sent an envoy to the Hague to express their desire for peace. At the same time the Archduke had also addressed them. He pointed out that they had no cause of complaint against the Infanta, and declared that she would treat with justice and goodwill all who would show themselves her good subjects and vassals, as, according to her father's act of cession, they should do. To this the United Provinces returned no answer. When, after many months, the Estates-General received a reply, it revealed a feeling of repugnance to any kind of accord with the Archdukes. The United Provinces urged the Southern Netherlands to join them against the "common enemy." They declared that, given help for only one year, it would be easy to drive the Spaniards from every part of the Low Countries.

In spite of this unpromising reply, the Archdukes in 1600 allowed the Estates-General to approach the United

Provinces, inviting them to a conference, at which the intentions of both parties might be revealed. They however reserved to themselves the right of judging, together with the Estates, of the form in which the peace was to be discussed.

The United Provinces at first declined to receive the deputies of the Estates, declaring that they were not free agents, and calling upon the "prelates, nobles, and all lovers of their country" to deliver the Netherlands from the Spanish tyranny.

When finally they agreed to a conference, and the deputies arrived at Bergen-op-Zoom, the result was what might have been foreseen. The conference took place on July 21st. The Dutch, after their victory at Nieuport, felt less inclined than ever to treat with Spain. Olden-Barneveldt, who acted as their spokesman, began with a long recital of the cruelties perpetrated by the Spaniards. He complained that the Netherland fortresses were still in Spanish hands, and that the Estates-General had made no effort to oppose this at the time of the cession to the Infanta. The Dutch declared that since that cession the Netherlands were more completely under the dominion of Spain than before; and that in dealing with the deputies of the Estates, they would only be dealing with the Archdukes and the King of Spain, which they could not consent to do. When the Belgian deputies reminded them of their duty to their Princes, the Dutch insisted that these Princes must be driven out. Thus the conference ended. The issue revealed the fact that the United Provinces would agree to no accord which did not altogether exclude the Spaniards. It seemed obvious that they had agreed to a conference only

in the hope of rousing the Netherlands against the Archdukes. It was the first of a succession of attempts on the part of the Northern Provinces to draw the Southern Provinces to them, in an alliance which should expel the Spaniards from the Low Countries.

Meanwhile in Brussels a battle of words was raging with regard to ways and means. The Estates on their side were anxious for a guarantee of the 250,000 crowns which they were to receive monthly from the King of Spain for the pay and general maintenance of the foreign soldiery. They wished the King to make provision by letters of credit for a year in advance instead of only for a month. The Archdukes assured them that this was already guaranteed; but gave the Estates permission to make direct application to Spain, if they wished. It was indeed not the King's promissory letters which were lacking. Spanish credit was so bad that the merchants refused to lend.¹ Even had the Spanish government been very prompt in attempting to meet the demands of the Archdukes, they would have found difficulty in producing the amounts required. For many months discussion was rife concerning the sum to be raised by the provinces, and the expenses which it was proposed they should defray. After the battle of Nieuport, in their enthusiasm the Estates made an effort to give prompt help. But when the Archdukes demanded that their share of the expenses should be 300,000 florins a month, they protested. The sums which were offered by each province, after much discussion, amounted to little over 200,000 florins. The Archdukes then took the somewhat arbitrary course of revising the quotas

¹ Infanta, "Correspondencia."

offered by each province so that the total should amount to the higher sum which they had demanded. Some of the provinces assented to the increase; but the assembled Estates, through their spokesman, William Maes, expressed their amazement at such high-handed action.

The Archdukes had been minded to dismiss the recalcitrant assembly peremptorily. They however reconsidered their course, and the Estates were permitted to present a remonstrance. Therein they made a great effort to secure control over the subsidy which they granted, and to guard against arbitrary imposition of expenses, and against waste. They had already asked for a detailed account of the distribution of the garrisons which they supported. They now asked that the money raised by them as a subsidy should be received and handled in each province by a clerk of the Estates. They further asked that from this sum the garrisons of the province should first be paid, and that the surplus should go to a common fund which should be employed for the payment of the regiments maintained by the Estates. They also demanded the appointment of a receiver-general, and a meeting in Brussels three times a year of deputies from the provinces to consider the state of the subsidy.

In their remonstrance the Estates also declared for the abolition of charges for provisions and men, imposed without their consent. They again insisted on the punishment of mutineers and the proper maintenance of discipline in the army. They declared that no one should be exempted from taxation in connexion with the subsidy. Finally, they asked the Archdukes to

reduce their household to the footing of that of the former Dukes of Burgundy.

The proceedings of the Estates-General of 1600 seem to merit some detailed account, because they reveal that the national assembly was not as subservient to the rulers as it has been represented by the critics of Spain. Questions of finance were discussed openly between the princes and the Estates. Some charges the Estates accepted, some they rejected. They granted the Archdukes a more considerable subsidy than any that had been voted up till then. But the occasion was one of great stress and danger. Even then the sum did not reach the 300,000 florins¹ a month demanded by their princes.

The Estates insisted on redress of grievances, and the maintenance of the privileges of the country. They also made a praiseworthy effort to bring about peace between the Northern and the Southern Provinces. It is true that much time was devoted to the private interests of each province. But it must be remembered that as yet the provinces did not form a political entity. They were merely a conglomeration of duchies and counties held together rather loosely since the time of Charles V. The same difficulty, though not to such an acute degree, faced Maurice of Nassau in his relations with many of the provinces of the northern Union. Politically neither Holland nor Belgium had as yet come into existence. The bond which held the seventeen diverse provinces of the Netherlands together under Charles V. was the personality of the Sovereign whom they all obeyed. Under the alien ruler Philip II. the bond was loosened. The severance of the seven

¹ It was about $\frac{2}{3}$ of this sum.

northern from the ten southern provinces had left both the Dutch provinces and the Spanish Netherlands in a state of weak cohesion.

During the year the farce of the peace negotiations with England was played and ended. It became evident that in spite of the desire of the Archdukes and of a large party in England for peace, Spanish pretensions would prevent an accommodation. After much bickering, the place of the conference was fixed at Boulogne. But it was obvious even before the opening, that there could be no agreement. The Spanish Council insisted that Elizabeth should relinquish her treaties with the Dutch, and forbid all commerce between Dutch and English merchants. This she could not do because, in the first place, her renunciation of the United Provinces would throw them into the arms of the King of France; and secondly, the Dutch trade had become of infinitely more importance to England than the Spanish, and was indeed a source of wealth which Elizabeth was little inclined to lose.

When, however, the envoys met at Boulogne, the details of the proposed treaty never even came under discussion. The Spanish envoys, Carillo, who had just come from Spain, and Balthasar de Zuñiga, the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, were instructed to be "very circumspect to uphold the dignity and prestige"¹ of the King of Spain. Immediately a dispute arose, with regard to precedence, between the Spanish and English envoys; and, in spite of the efforts of Verreyken and Richardot, the Archdukes' envoys, the proceedings broke up before any questions were discussed.

With the year 1601 the aspect of the war against the

¹ Hume, "Treason and Plot," p. 425.

Dutch changed. The Archdukes determined to besiege Ostend, the only remaining possession of the United Provinces in Flanders. It was recognized that the acquisition would prove a task of great difficulty; yet of such importance did it seem, that the Archdukes determined to subordinate all other operations to those required for the execution of this scheme. Ostend had, ever since the separation of the Northern and Southern Provinces, proved a source of continual annoyance to the cities of Flanders.¹ First fortified during the struggle with Spain under Philip II., this fishing village, alone of all places in Flanders, had remained faithful to the United Provinces. The natural advantages of the place, together with its newly made defences, had kept it from falling into the hands of the Spaniards. In 1583 Alexander Farnese, after his conquest of Dunkirk and Nieuport, remained for five days before Ostend; but finding that he could not take it, he raised the siege. Two years later, the Governor of Gravelines, La Motte, surprised the town, but was driven out with great loss while making his fortifications. During the succeeding years, Ostend owed its security to the fact that after the surrender of Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges, Elizabeth of England deemed it dangerous to her safety that the successes of the Prince of Parma should be crowned by the capture of so important a position. An Englishman, Edward Norreys, was put in command of the garrison; and under him Ostend became a perpetual "thorn in the foot" of the Flemings.

This thorn the cities of Flanders had frequently begged Albert to extract. In 1596 they had offered him a large sum of money, but at the time his campaign had ended

¹ Hæstens, "La Nouvelle Troye," Leyden, 1615.

in reconnoitring. He did not, however, scruple to attempt to acquire the place by a plot to poison the garrison. But this gallant effort met with no success.

The Archdukes were as anxious as were their subjects to be rid of this bane. Since Albert's arrival as Governor of the Netherlands the town had been greatly strengthened. Ramparts had been raised, bastions enlarged; and Ostend, already protected by a network of foss and canal, was further secured by fortifications. From behind this wall, the garrison plundered and harried the country round. Because of Ostend, the Archduke was obliged to keep a continual army on foot and wage a continual war in his own territory. Flanders, which in time of peace was reputed to form one-third of the value of the seventeen provinces, was practically given over to soldiery. In order to escape pillage the towns in the vicinity were forced to pay tribute; and to protect themselves they had, during the last few years, built some eighteen forts around Ostend. The upkeep of these forts cost the Estates of Flanders 90,000 crowns a month, and even with that they could not avoid depredations, or pay the garrisons with sufficient regularity to avoid mutiny.

They now once again called upon their Sovereigns to rid them of this source of trouble. They offered the Archduke 300,000 florins a month as long as the siege of Ostend should last, besides a further sum of 300,000 florins, one-third to be paid when the city was invested, one-third when a breach had been made, one-third when the town had been taken.

It was obvious that if the attempt was to be made that year, Ostend must immediately be invested. In Cleves, Maurice of Nassau was besieging Rheinberg,

and Count van den Berg, who commanded the Archduke's army, declared that the only way in which to save this important post, was to create a diversion by besieging Ostend.

After a delay of two months, while he awaited the arrival of troops and pay from Spain, the Archduke took the field. On July 5th, 1601, he arrived before Ostend, and formally invested it. His headquarters were at St Albert, one of the forts which surrounded the place. The Infanta accompanied him, and was frequently seen in the camp. But her letters make no mention of the "touching off of forty-pounders," "with her own serene fingers, in order to encourage the artillerymen," related by one Dutch authority.¹

Thus began the siege of Ostend, upon which, for three years, the eyes of Europe were riveted. It seemed to men at the time that they had never beheld such vast works of mining and counter-mining, such wonderful contrivances, as the batteries and engines, the construction of which occupied the minds of the most celebrated engineers of the age.

For the siege of Ostend became essentially the training-ground of war to which men flocked from all parts of Europe. Men of noble birth eager to see service, engineers glad of an opportunity to practise their profession, adventurers ready to fight for small pay and the chance of booty, swarmed into both camps. The ranks of besiegers and besieged alike contained men of every nation and all creeds.

In the Archdukes' camp, however, Spaniards, Italians and Walloons largely predominated; while in their enemy's ranks the English probably numbered as many

¹ Meteren, quoted by Motley, iv. ch. xxxix.

as the Dutch, French, Germans and Scotch together.¹ The English were, in great part, the sweepings of the London prisons and of the press-gangs. But in command of them, and of the Ostend garrison, was Sir Francis Vere, of Nieuport fame, a veteran campaigner belonging to a breed of splendid fighters.

From the first the difficulty of the Archdukes lay in excluding the relief which continually came to the garrison by sea. It cannot be said that at any time during the siege they succeeded in encircling the place altogether. The sea had eaten into the coast of Flanders in such a way that the Ostend of the time was almost an island.² Thus ample facility was offered to the many Dutch, English and French ships which were interested in the victualling of the place. Throughout the siege, the besieged were well supplied with every kind of provision ; while in the trenches, the Archdukes' army, through three terrible winters, suffered the greatest hardship and deprivation. The Spanish court had never approved the enterprise, deeming it foolhardy.³ The ministers made no effort to hasten men and money, the troops in the trenches were ill-paid and mutinous, and the popularity of the Archdukes waned.

During the winter of 1601 Albert was obliged to leave the Infanta at Nieuport in the intense cold, while he hastened to face Maurice of Nassau in Brabant. After a gallant defence, Rheinberg, on the Rhine, had fallen on July 30th ; and this stronghold, together with Mörs, a little higher up the Rhine, which he captured, gave Maurice the key to Cleves and Jülich, and the

¹ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc," and Motley.

² Motley, vol. iv. ch. xxxix.

³ Villa, "Ambrosio Spinola," ch. v. pp. 47 *seq.*

entry into Germany, where he might hope to find allies. He proceeded to besiege Bois-le-Duc, in Brabant, near the frontier of Holland. The garrison was a very small one, but was inspired by the strong Catholic enthusiasm of the populace, by the knowledge that Bois-le-Duc had never suffered capture, and by the energy of the Governor, the *Sieur de Grobbendonck*. Aided by the clergy and the magistrates, the garrison made a splendid resistance. It was however at its last gasp, when the extreme coldness of the weather and the freezing of the rivers forced Maurice to abandon the siege.

All this time the siege of Ostend was essentially the war. During the winter, and throughout the next year, mining and counter-mining continued, assaults were made and repulsed, new engines were floated, and were sometimes successful and sometimes failed, and still nothing of importance had been done. Thousands of men had already fallen on either side, and yet the new harbour on the east of the town, known as the Gullet, remained open.¹ The besieged were able not only to draft in men, but their wounded and sick were taken by sea to Zeeland. And in 1602 the commander Vere, and a large part of the garrison, came out by night, and a new commander and garrison entered, without the enemy being able to prevent them.

Meanwhile the ill-will against the Archdukes grew in intensity. In Spain it was suggested that the Constable of Castile should take command in Flanders, and that the Archdukes should retire to Burgundy, because Albert was so hated by the soldiers that his presence could never do any good. This, however, Albert some-

¹ Motley.

what naturally declined to do. He also refused to follow the advice of his generals, who urged him to relinquish the siege, and obstinately persisted that he would carry it through. There was at the time a rumour of a conspiracy in the camp to seize the persons of Isabel and Albert.¹ And as the condition of the soldiery grew more miserable, and discontent spread from the camp to the capital, the people began to blame the Infanta, declaring that her love of luxury added to the penury, and that the Archduke had been fortunate in war before his marriage with her.²

Isabel herself, seeing the sufferings of the troops, declared that they could hardly be blamed if they all mutinied. She complained bitterly against her brother and his counsellors, and even, it appears, against her husband; and between the two there was for the time "not that good understanding that one could wish." The Infanta saw that Albert's efforts were producing no impression, and feared that the siege would prove the grave of his reputation. She declared that she had suffered nothing but misery since her arrival in the Netherlands; and that it was her intention to retire to Spain, if the siege was not successfully accomplished.

The exploits of the army in Brabant served but to increase the discontent. Maurice of Nassau, after trying to draw the Admiral of Aragon into an engagement, had rapidly countermarched to the Lower Meuse and laid siege to Grave. An attack on his lines made by the Genoese, Ambrose Spinola, who had lately arrived in the Netherlands, failed, and Grave sur-

¹ "Memorials," Winwood, i. p. 383, Feb. 3rd, 160½.

² Record Office, "S. P. Foreign, Flanders," vol. vii. p. 8 *seq.*

rendered on September 18th, 1602, after sixty days' siege.

Meanwhile, a force of Italians had mutinied and flung themselves on the territory of Liège, the common ground of malcontents. Thence they had attempted to seize Diest; and failing, passed on to Hoogstraaten, a small place in Brabant, near to Breda, a powerful city belonging to the Dutch. They now numbered some 3000, and with the help which they received from the United Provinces, they exercised a kind of tyranny on the country round. For that year the Archduke was able to do nothing. But in the following year he detached a large force from the army around Ostend. The leader of the expedition, Frederick van den Berg, soon found himself outmatched by Maurice. As the Dutch commander marched upon him he withdrew, and Maurice entered Hoogstraaten in triumph, and made a convention with the rebels. It was just this inability to isolate the mutineers from contact with his enemies that made disturbances among the Archduke's troops so disastrous. Nevertheless throughout the year, the vital interest of the war was the siege of Ostend. The Dutch had once more been able to introduce a new commander and fresh troops into the garrison, fleets of transports still came in. In one splendid attack the Spaniards had "pared off a goodly slice of Ostend";¹ yet the ring of defences was still unbroken.

In May 1603 the Spaniards suffered a loss in an endeavour to prevent the English and Dutch fleets from bringing supplies to Ostend. Frederick Spinola, Duke of Santa Severina, a young man belonging to a great Genoese family, who had spent the greater part of his life in

¹ Motley.

Spanish service, had done considerable damage to the Dutch by privateering. It was now his intention to reconnoitre, with a view to laying waste the territory of Zeeland. Issuing from the port of Sluys, he fell in with the Dutch admiral. After a furious encounter, in which Spinola, who was directing the prow of his galley under the stern of the Dutch commander's ship, had his right arm shot off, the Spaniards were forced to beat a retreat, leaving their commander and at least 300 men dead.

It was the death of Frederick Spinola which brought his more famous brother, Ambrose Spinola, back to the Netherlands. He had, with Frederick, been sent by the King of Spain to the Netherlands for the purpose of attacking England.¹ For Philip III. had not yet abandoned the idea of supporting the Infanta's candidature in England, even against her will, and elaborate plans were drawn up for the employment of the troops of the brothers Spinola. But very soon the exigencies of the Archdukes forced Philip to give up his plan, and to order the brothers to help Albert. Ambrose took part in the Admiral of Aragon's unsuccessful campaign against Grave. Now, after serving in Italy, he returned and offered himself to the Archduke.

Albert, who was harassed by the unwillingness of his officers to carry out his plans, gladly acceded. He proposed that Spinola should take over the command of the siege of Ostend, while he would himself oppose Maurice in Brabant. Spinola undertook to find large sums for the payment of the troops and their provision. An agreement was subsequently drawn up between the Archduke Albert and the Marquis Spinola, in which the

¹ Villa, "Spinola," ch. vi.

latter undertook to capture Ostend. The Council of State in Madrid approved this agreement, "although Spinola is not such a soldier as is needed for such an undertaking,"¹ because they relied on him to restore, by his great fortune, the confidence in Spanish affairs which the army had lost. It was indeed a strange agreement by which a young and inexperienced general undertook to capture a position which had been held for over two years, and which was considered impregnable. Yet the result justified Albert's choice. His youth gave him energy, his anxiety to avoid mistakes supplied the necessary caution. His purse seemed as inexhaustible as his activity. The wealth of the Genoese house to which he belonged was well known. Ambrose was to show that, patrician as he was, his endurance could surpass that of his most hardened soldiers. From the time of Spinola's arrival, the troops were paid, fed, and supplied with ammunition from his own pocket. Inspired by his vigilance and skill, their spirits revived, and they went to the assault with greater courage and vigour. Day and night Spinola attended to the cares of approaches, mines, assaults and trenches, exposed to the fire of the enemy and the inclemency of the weather. Gradually, in spite of many losses, the besiegers began to eat their way into the town, and the conviction was forced upon the Dutch that the siege was actually approaching its end.

They therefore determined to create a diversion, as to attempt a relief of Ostend would be very difficult, owing to Spinola's entrenchments and defences. Maurice of Nassau, with great secrecy, prepared to besiege Sluys. But it came to Spinola's ears, and he warned the

¹ Villa, ch. vii. pp. 64-72.

Archduke to garrison and victual the place while there was yet time. Albert, however, was engaged in treating with the mutineers. Only a few men were sent to Sluys, and by the time the provisions arrived, it was too late to introduce them. Moreover, Don Luis de Velasco, who was sent to oppose Maurice's army on the march towards Sluys, was repulsed; and the Council of Generals, under the presidency of the Archduke, declared that it was impossible to attack Maurice successfully in his trenches. They therefore ordered Spinola to go to the relief of Sluys. Spinola was in despair.¹ He was ordered to go with 6000 troops to the relief of a place which had already been besieged two and a half months. In the meantime, he was to leave Ostend, when "we have stormed and are inside the rampart, and have gained the other ravelins which the enemy had made inside the town, and are surrounding their last retreat."

The attempt to relieve Sluys was, as Spinola had foreseen, destined to failure. Day and night he marched through marshy land, hoping against hope to find an entry through Maurice's defences on the side of Damme. He found, as he had expected, that the Dutch army was too well entrenched for him to attack from the land side, and therefore determined to attempt a landing in the island of Cadzand, which lies off the coast of Flanders, opposite Sluys.² There a fierce encounter took place; and there Maurice of Nassau and Spinola, who were to oppose each other through so many years, for the first time came face to face. As might have been expected, the Spaniards were forced to retire, leaving many dead behind them. On the following day Sluys surrendered, and 4000 men, more dead than alive,

¹ Villa, pp. 76-7.

² "Guerra di Fiandra," Bentivoglio, Bk. VI. ch. vii.

came out. In three months, with no great loss, Maurice had gained a new foothold in Flanders (August 20th, 1604).

Meanwhile Spinola returned to Ostend, which he ought not to have left under any consideration. Though the besiegers were rapidly eating into the heart of the town, discord and jealousy raged among the officers, and discontent once more seized the men. Spinola feared that Maurice would march to the relief of Ostend, and that he would be attacked in his lines. The Estates-General of the United Provinces indeed urged Maurice to march directly to Ostend. But he, thinking that he had in Sluys a more valuable foothold in Flanders than the ruins of Ostend could ever give him, strongly opposed their plan. By the time he decided to obey the will of the Estates, it was too late. One by one the defences of the town fell before the assaults of the besiegers, until on September 13th the important redoubt called the Sand Hill, which had resisted for three years, was captured. This left in the hands of the besieged nothing but the heart of the town, known as Little Troy, not sufficient land to hold new fortifications.¹ Despairing of relief from Maurice, the *Sieur de Marquette*, the Governor, decided to treat. An accord was signed on September 20th, and on September 22nd the garrison to the number of 4000 men came out well supplied with artillery and ammunition, with all the honours of war. Spinola treated them magnificently, feasting them, and conveying them at his own expense to Sluys.

Hardly a man of the former population remained in Ostend. When Isabel came, and was conducted

¹ Motley, IV. ch. lii.

through the fortifications, she wept at the sight of the mound of earth, all that remained of the city which she had been so anxious to conquer. The place was soon rebuilt, but for some time it lacked a population. Of the numbers who fell during the three years, it is difficult to judge. It seems probable that the siege cost the besiegers some 100,000 men and the besieged about 60,000.¹ The "thorn" which had troubled the cities of Flanders had been extracted. Relief had been obtained. *Te Deums* were chanted for the capture of Ostend. But of triumph there could be little question. The price had been too heavy. Moreover, the future of the provinces showed that the relief was hardly as great as had been hoped. The Dutch had been allowed to seize Sluys, which might prove a fresh thorn; while Ostend, for the capture of which so many lives had been sacrificed, lay a heap of ruins.

¹ Villa, p. 87. (Other accounts vary.)

CHAPTER IX

A RESPITE

Peace concluded with England, 1604—The campaigns of 1605-6—Spinola's successes—Beginning of negotiations for a truce—An armistice for eight months arranged, May 1607—The negotiations at the Hague—Difficulties and intrigues—Jeannin, Henry IV.'s ambassador—The Twelve Years' Truce finally signed and proclaimed, April 14th, 1609

DURING the three years occupied by the siege of Ostend, Isabel spent much of her life in and near the camp, absorbed by the difficulties which oppressed her husband and his officers. The campaign afforded an opportunity for the revelation of her great strength of mind. She made a vow, we are told, that until Ostend was captured she would not change her linen; which gradually assumed that hue, since known as "couleur Isabelle." Such an action, even in an age less nice in matters of cleanliness than our own, must have passed for fortitude.

Meanwhile, the peace with England, so long desired by the Archdukes, was actually concluded. It has been seen how the negotiations of 1600 proved fruitless, owing to the lack of sincerity on the part of Spain. Since then much had happened. Philip III. had still for some time persisted in his support of the Infanta's candidature. He gave credence to the reports of the Jesuits, and of Don Balthasar de Zuñiga, who took the opportunity

of his presence at the Boulogne conference to intrigue with the English Catholics.¹ In spite of the coldness with which the Archdukes looked on any enterprise against England, an expedition was fitted out, which met with disaster at Kinsale in 1602. It was not until a year after this that the futile deliberations of the Council of State in Madrid, anent the Infanta's candidature, came to an end. The bubble was pricked by the Count of Olivares (the father of Philip IV.'s famous minister), who declared with much spirit that Spain was not in a position to press the Infanta's claim in England, even if Isabel desired it, which she did not.² Furthermore, the indifference of the Archdukes had prejudiced their popularity; and now the only thing to be done was to support the most popular Catholic native claimant to the English throne, and by those means exclude the heretic King of Scotland.

This counsel the King of Spain hastened to adopt, but it came too late. A few weeks later, on March 24th, 1603, Elizabeth of England died. James Stuart had made his preparations. No difficulty interfered with his accession, and the hopes of a Catholic succession in England were at an end.

James was the least warlike of kings, and his desire for peace seconded that of the Archdukes. Even in Spain, men were beginning to realize that until a treaty was concluded with England, no successful war could be waged against the Dutch. They were beginning, therefore, to desire peace; and, after many months of discussion, the ministry so far condescended as to agree to a conference in London. On various points the

¹ Hume, "Treason and Plot," 425-7.

² "Calendar of State Papers, Spanish," vol. iv., Martin Hume.

Spanish envoys had to give way. James refused to acknowledge that the Dutch were rebels, or to restrain Englishmen from serving in their armies. He moreover declared that it was against his honour to relinquish the cautionary towns in the Low Countries (Brill, Flushing and others), which had been put into Elizabeth's hands by the Dutch. The Spaniards were forced into agreement; and on August $\frac{18}{28}$ th, 1604, a treaty was concluded in London between the Kings of Spain and of England, and the Archdukes, the Sovereigns of the Netherlands.

For two years the war in the Netherlands dragged on. The Archdukes' armies were generally successful, and the result justified the confidence which they had placed in Ambrose Spinola. In the winter following the surrender of Ostend, they dispatched the marquis to Spain, bearing letters, which set forth the condition of the Netherlands. Isabel's letter contained a complete eulogy of the Genoese commander. She urged her brother in consideration of the zeal which Spinola had shown, and the resources which he had spent, to give him the chief command. Both she and her husband declared that the extraordinary confidence with which he inspired the army more than made up for any lack of experience. There was an intrigue on foot in Spain to place over Spinola, whose first appointment had never been popular, Don Augustin de Messia, the Governor of Antwerp. But finally the entreaties of the Archdukes prevailed; and Spinola returned to the Netherlands not only in the position of commander-in-chief, but also with the control of the finances. While in Spain he had also become a Knight of the Golden Fleece.

Spinola's plan of campaign for 1605 was to carry war

into the heart of the enemy's country, through Friesland, which was not so well defended by water as the other provinces, and thus more open to attack.¹ His intention was kept secret, while he reconnoitred in the west of Brabant, giving the impression that his object was to recover Sluys or to capture Breda.

For the moment the intended Frisian campaign received a check from an attempt made by the Dutch on Antwerp. A fleet was sent up the Scheldt to break the dykes and submerge the country. The plans, secret as they were, came to the ear of Spinola, who hastened to Antwerp and strengthened the garrisons on the Scheldt. The Dutch thus found their enemy on the alert; and being attacked on disembarking from the river, they suffered a bad repulse. Meanwhile Spinola's objective still remained unknown to Maurice, and even to the Spanish officers serving under him. He hastened across Brabant, and, collecting his veteran troops who had come from Italy at Maestricht, marched towards the Rhine, and crossed it at Kaiserswerth in Cologne territory. Forts were thrown up with great rapidity, and the Count Bucquoy, one of the Flemish generals, was left in command, while Spinola began his march towards Friesland. Maurice of Nassau, persisting in the idea that this march was only a feint, sent his cousin Ernest to fortify Rheinberg, which, he was convinced, was Spinola's real objective. Thus the marquis was free to pursue his march through the neutral German territories. Perfect discipline was maintained, and hence the inhabitants very readily brought victuals to the troops. Thence he passed into Overijssel, and crossing the province encamped

¹ Villa, ch. ix,

before Oldenzaal at the entrance into Friesland. The place was poorly fortified ; and the garrison, having "little heart and less provisions," almost immediately surrendered. Spinola was now within a day's march of Linghen, which had from the first been his objective.

Strategically Linghen was a position of great importance, lying in a plain which formed the chief gate into East and West Friesland, provinces which practically bordered on Germany. The loss of Linghen would cut the Dutch off from their German allies, besides opening a passage for Spinola into the heart of the United Provinces. The place belonged to Maurice, who had recently added to its fortifications. But Spinola hoped that, being so far from the enemy, and considered immune from attack, it would be ill-provided for a siege. And so it proved to be. In spite of the strong fortifications made by Maurice, Linghen offered but little resistance, and the skill of Spinola's engineers captured the place in a few days (August 19th).

By this time Maurice had brought his army from Flanders to Deventer in Overijssel. He came too late to save Linghen, but his appearance on the Spanish flank forced Spinola to retire to the Rhine. He left his new conquests well fortified, and determined to make an attempt on Wachtendonck. This most important place in Gueldres had been captured by Maurice at the beginning of the war. Spinola now sent Bucquoy to recover it. And in spite of the Council of War, who declared that the season was too far advanced, and the climate too bad to warrant such a risk to the reputation of the army, he ordered the siege.¹ Bucquoy soon captured

¹ Villa.

the place, and Cracow, a castle in the County of Mörs on the Rhine, also fell to him.

The Archduke meanwhile, fearing a repetition of the discontent of the German Princes, ordered Spinola to destroy the fortresses made by him along the Rhine in the neutral Imperial territory. Spinola therefore withdrew to Roerort in the county of Mörs, which was under the jurisdiction of Flanders. Close by lay the Dutch army. Maurice, who was in command, sent forward his young brother Frederick Henry to attack the Spanish cavalry. His first onset was successful. But when the Dutch came to the main quarters of the Spaniards, though their numbers were greater, panic seized them; and Maurice, coming up, was unable to check their headlong flight. Spinola won the engagement, partly by a ruse, ordering his drummers to march in front of the troops beating their drums as if the whole army were approaching. His losses were few, but among them were Trivulzio, one of his finest colonels, and his nephew Nicolas Doria.

This was the last engagement of the campaign of 1605, and Spinola immediately returned to Brussels to consult with the Archdukes regarding all the operations necessary for the following year. It was decided to maintain one army on the Rhine, which should make every effort to press forward through Overijssel and cross the Yssel. A second army was to cross the river Waal and gain a footing in Betuwe, "the good island," that fertile strip of territory lying between the Waal and the Lek, to the south of Gueldres and Holland.¹ Spinola hoped by thus attacking the province of Holland from two sides to force a

¹ Villa, ch. xi. and Motley, IV. ch. xlv.

surrender. He had every reason to suppose that, Holland once in his hand, the conquest of the other northern provinces would not prove difficult.

In consideration of the importance of the enterprise, the Archdukes supported Spinola's design to go to Spain, in order to win the approval and help of the King and the Council of State in making a great effort. The policy was soon approved. The crux, as always, was the financial question. The Council were afraid to vote money, owing to the frequent delays in the arrival of the silver fleet from the Indies, the chief source of their supplies. Many months were spent in debating the question. After Spinola had left Spain, he lay in a fever for some time in Lombardy; and he did not arrive in Brussels until June.

In his absence the war had languished, and the Archduke was anxious, as the season was so far advanced, to put his plan into execution without delay. All the money which Spinola had sent from Spain had been spent, and Albert had borrowed more at a high rate of interest. Yet Spinola was forced to make a further loan in order to attempt to pay the newly enlisted troops. The campaign presented great difficulties. Rain had been falling for weeks, and Friesland was a vast quagmire. The roads were almost impassable, and the troops suffered both from the difficulties of marching and moving artillery, and from diseases bred by the damp. Spinola's distress was great. The rivers were too full to guard, and he knew that on the opposite banks, both of the Waal and the Yssel, the Dutch had planted a strong defence of forts. He tried to repeat the campaign of the preceding year. Establishing his camp between Zutphen and Deventer,

he sent out his generals to penetrate beyond the Yssel and the Waal. One of them, Borgia, succeeded in capturing Lochem in Zutphen, but as both the attempts to cross the Yssel and the Waal failed, Spinola changed his plan, and determined to attack Grol in Zutphen, a position important for the protection of the places captured in the preceding year. It surrendered in a few days, and Spinola then resolved to attack Rheinberg. This stronghold, which had been captured by Maurice some years before, had been newly fortified during the preceding winter. The Dutch called it the new Ostend, their outpost of defence. Spinola's forces were so greatly diminished by disease that he was obliged to wait for reinforcements from Brabant. He was further helped by noble volunteers, who began to flock to his standard for the honour of serving under so famous a general. After more than a month's siege, Rheinberg surrendered (Oct. 1st.). Spinola's energy had been almost superhuman, but his losses had been great, and once more mutiny was beginning to spread.

Yet he determined to make one more effort. Maurice, having failed in an attempt to relieve Rheinberg, had penetrated to Zutphen, and after recovering Lochem sat down before Grol. Spinola decided that if this place were lost, all his conquests of the preceding year must fall. Moreover, Rheinberg, which had been taken in order to secure the passage of the Rhine, would be of little use, if the Netherlands had no possession beyond the river. Therefore, against the advice of the Army Council, who urged the weakness and discontent of the army, the lateness of the season, and the probable strength of the enemy's fortifications, he



MARQUIS AMBROSE SPINOLA

RUBENS

D'Irenberg Collection

decided to stake all in an attempt to relieve Grol. The place was held by a very weak garrison under Count Henry van den Berg. Outside lay Maurice's army of 15,000 foot and 3000 horse. The rains interfered with his entrenching operations. Moreover, he foresaw no possibility of an attack from Spinola's broken army. Yet this army was approaching his camp with all speed. By the time that he realized his danger, Spinola had crossed an apparently impenetrable morass, and was upon him before he could complete his entrenchments. The garrison meanwhile held out gallantly, cheered by the sound of the cannon which Spinola fired every night to let them know that help was near.¹ Though his forces were probably almost twice as many as Spinola's, and the Dutch were fresh while the Spaniards were worn-out by their long march, Maurice, on November 12th, decided to raise the siege of Grol, broke up his camp, and withdrew.

This encounter practically ended the campaign ; and with it the great war, which had lasted so many years, also drew to a close. The last two campaigns had brought the Archdukes greater successes than they had yet known. Spinola had achieved a great reputation. This young volunteer, this silken patrician, had actually shown himself capable of inflicting defeat on the tried general, Prince Maurice of Nassau, whose whole life had been spent in arms. In the eyes of contemporaries, Spinola's conduct of the siege of Rheinberg, and of the relief of Grol, were among the most brilliant military exploits which the Flemish war had yet witnessed.²

Yet Spinola, no less than the Archdukes, realized

¹ L'histoire de l'archiduc Albert.

² Bentivoglio, quoted by Motley.

that such captures as he had made would, in the long run, be useless. He could never hope for sufficient resources to carry an effective war into the heart of the enemy's country. Moreover, if he had been victorious by land, at sea the Spaniards had suffered defeat. The Dutch were successfully attacking their colonies, the source of their wealth.

The Archdukes ardently longed for peace; and their recent successes seemed to offer a favourable opportunity for approaching the United Provinces. Already in May the Seneschal of Kessel in Gueldres, the *Sieur de Wittenhorst*, had been at the Hague to sound the inclinations of the people. He had achieved nothing; and indeed had found it necessary to conceal his object, and to give out that he came from the Emperor.¹ Yet, if official opinion at the Hague was against peace, the Seneschal thought that he detected among the people generally no disinclination for it. The Archdukes determined to prosecute their object; and at the end of the year the *Sieur de Wittenhorst* returned to the Hague, with Doctor Gevaerts, of Turnhout in Brabant, now a neutral place. They found that, though it was a penal offence in the republic to speak of peace or truce, yet they were admitted to many a discussion, and especially by the Advocate of Holland, Olden-Barneveldt, who seemed very ready to second their efforts. They carried instructions from the Archduke, if the question of an armistice were mentioned, to agree to it in his name immediately.

As soon as the matter came to open discussion, the Estates-General hastened to vindicate their independence. They declared that they would not treat, as

¹ Meteren, "*L'histoire des Pays-Bas.*"

long as the Archdukes maintained any pretension of sovereignty over them. Neither side trusted the other; each while discussing peace was preparing for war. Yet the Archdukes pushed on their negotiations, while in Spain they were urging the necessity of their action, and striving in every way to gain the King's sanction. In February a new agent of theirs appeared at the Hague. This was Father John Neyen, the Commissary-General of the Franciscans, a man whose father had served William the Silent, and whose mother still lived in Zeeland. He was possessed of an open, frank countenance and manner, and a subtle mind. He was a devoted servant of the Archdukes. After many journeys between the Hague and Brussels, in the disguise of a layman, he in March carried to the Dutch an important document, which constituted a first step towards peace. The Archdukes declared that they were ready to treat with the United Provinces "in the quality of, and considering them as free countries, provinces, and estates, over whom their Highnesses make no claim whatever."¹ They were prepared to make either a perpetual peace, or a truce for a long period, either of twelve, fifteen, or twenty years, on reasonable conditions.

In order to facilitate the making of this peace, they now proposed a cessation of arms for eight months, on condition that the Estates would give a provisional agreement within a week and a declaration in writing with regard to the treaty to follow, before September 1st. This document, given at Brussels on March 13th, 1607, by Albert and Isabel, the President Richardot and Audiencier Verreyken, was accepted by the Estates-General towards the middle of April, and publicly

¹ Meteren.

announced. The armistice was to run for eight months, from May 4th. During that time no sieges were to be undertaken, no invasions made, no fortifications erected, and the soldiers were to be kept within walls. Within three months the King of Spain must give his ratification of this truce, and meanwhile Commissioners were to be appointed on both sides to treat of the terms of peace. The Archdukes had wished the truce to hold through all the seas as well as on land. But to this the Dutch, considering how their trade flourished through the raids on the high seas and in the Spanish colonies, refused to consent.

The Archdukes carried through this truce with extraordinary rapidity and secrecy. They knew that they were surrounded by intriguers who would do their utmost to prevent peace, even when the preliminaries were arranged. The news came as a surprise to the courts of France and England, where the ministers had hoped to gain much by acting as intermediaries, and had not contemplated the possibility of even an armistice without their intervention. In England especially anger was felt that the truce had been settled without the aid of King James. The ministers in London and abroad had no hesitation in declaring their disbelief in the sincerity of the Archdukes, or at any rate of Spain.¹

That the Archdukes had been wise, the difficulties and intrigues which surrounded the negotiations for peace sufficiently showed. No understanding or confidence existed between the courts at Madrid and at Brussels. In Spain a powerful war-party opposed the Archdukes' action, which they declared resulted from an ignoble

¹ Cf. Winwood, ii. 302 and 306.

personal desire for ease. Lerma, who held the reins of government, had no comprehension of the situation in the Netherlands. The Archdukes had entreated that the King's ratification of the eight months' truce might be sent to them without the slightest alteration of the form, as agreed to between them and the Estates-General at the Hague; not even so much as the omission of a comma. Yet when the ratification arrived, they saw that their demand had again been flouted. In it the King spoke of the Archdukes as "princes and sovereign proprietors of all the Netherlands." The clause by which the United Provinces were described as free countries over which no authority was claimed had been omitted. Further, the document was subscribed, "I, the King," the Spanish King's signature in addressing his vassals, and not suitable in relation to an independent power.¹ Such a document the Estates-General could naturally not accept; and until another and more acceptable could be obtained from Spain, all the elements which made for war gained in strength. Even when the armistice had been ratified, and the Archdukes' envoys had arrived at the Hague, peace seemed very far off.

In the first place, there was a party in the United Provinces which strenuously opposed it. At the head of the war-party stood Maurice of Nassau, the man whose reputation had been won in war, and whose authority would be gone, or at least combated, in time of peace. With him in his desire for a continuance of war were the merchants of the Dutch East India Company, the stockholders in all the great commercial companies which traded east and west, the sailors, and

Meteren.

all such as were occupied in the manufacture of articles connected with shipping and trade. Many of the preachers supported Maurice, and from the pulpits thundered denunciations of the peace with Spain. Yet there were others who eagerly desired it.

A pamphlet written early in 1607 dwells upon the sufferings of the United Provinces during the war.¹ The writer declares that lack of commerce, the bad condition of agriculture, and the failure of profits from the fisheries, have reduced the provinces to the direst poverty. Enormous loans have been made at interest, besides those from foreign princes ; and it is impossible to raise further taxes and subsidies without crushing an already overburdened population.

Complaints were further being made of the slowness in raising troops, and of the favouritism that was taking the place of merit in the selection of officers for the army. The outlying districts were beginning to grow disaffected, declaring that they were being sacrificed to the interests of Holland and Zeeland. Perhaps the Archduke was not altogether deceived when he declared that the provinces of Friesland and Overijssel had expressed a readiness to come to an agreement with him, and acknowledge him as their prince.

In January 1608 the Archduke's envoys—Spinola, Richardot, Verreyken, the Friar John Neyen and Don Juan de Mancicidor, Spinola's Spanish secretary, arrived at the Hague. The envoys of England, France, and the Emperor were also present. There followed months of negotiation and intrigue, the meaning of which it is sometimes difficult to unravel. Of all diplomatists,

¹ " *Considérations d'Etat sur la Traicté de la Paix* " (Société de l'histoire de Belgique. Rahlenbeck).

Jeannin, Henry IV.'s envoy, was the most skilful, and it was he who, when the negotiations broke down, was apparently instrumental in renewing them. Henry IV. had long supported the Dutch in their opposition to Spain. But he was playing a double part. He had probably cherished the idea of absorbing them into France for some time. Lately this desire had taken a definite form, in the negotiations which went on between Henry's ministers and Aerssens, the agent of the Estates-General in Paris, and between Buzanval, Henry IV.'s agent at the Hague, and the Advocate, Olden-Barneveldt. Barneveldt and Aerssens, though probably not guilty of the slightest treasonable intention with regard to the United Provinces, were ready to listen to Henry's demands for the possession of ports and the granting of sovereignty on very favourable terms, in order to secure his support.

With Jeannin at the Hague their intrigues grew more vigorous. It was probably the knowledge of them that finally decided Philip III. and Lerma to yield to the Dutch on the point of admitting their liberty. Whether they intended to keep faith with the United Provinces or not, they would prefer even to see them independent rather than under the dominion of France or England.

The chief points to be settled were the questions of navigation and of religion. Spain still assumed her monopoly of trade, and strove to prevent the Dutch from trading in the Indies. The Archdukes had led the King to believe that the Dutch would abstain from this trade, in return for the recognition of their independence.¹ But they can hardly have believed it themselves. They knew that trade constituted the strength

¹ Archduke's Correspondence.

of the United Provinces, and that they would not forego it.

Step by step the question was fought out, and at each difficulty Maurice of Nassau urged the breaking off of negotiations. The rivalry between him and Barneveldt had been growing for many years. Stories, perhaps untrue, but indicating the tension of feeling known to exist, were current; how Maurice had called the Advocate a liar, and had struck him or attempted to strike him. But the peace-party was gaining the ascendancy, and finally only the province of Zeeland and Delft and Amsterdam in Holland opposed the treaty. Negotiations were actually broken off, and during the winter of 1608, the Archduke in despair, as a last resource sent his confessor, Iñigo de Brizuela, to represent to the King in Madrid the necessity of yielding to the Dutch demands.

He was more successful than any other envoy. The Flemish and Dutch envoys, the English and French ambassadors once more met at Antwerp. And there, at length on April 9th, 1609, the Twelve Years' Truce was concluded. In a few days it was ratified by the Archdukes in Brussels, and by the Estates-General of the United Provinces assembled at Bergen-op-Zoom, a Dutch town in the north of Brabant. On April 14th, the truce was proclaimed at Antwerp by the *Sieur de Moy*, the secretary of the city.¹ A platform had been erected outside the town-hall. And to the sound of trumpets and hautboys, and the booming of cannon from the town, the citadel, and the battleships in the harbour, the terms of the treaty were read, the envoys and

¹ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc."

ambassadors looking on from a window of the town-hall.

The provisions of the treaty constituted a defeat for Spanish assumptions. Spain had been forced to negotiate with her rebel provinces, as with free estates over whom she claimed no authority. Henceforth, though Spain might not acknowledge their independence, they were actually a free nation. Spain had hoped to maintain her monopoly of trade in the New World. She was forced, in however obscure and doubtful phraseology, to grant the provinces the right of navigation and trade in the Indies. Finally Spain, being unable by force to restore the Roman faith in the United Provinces, strove to obtain a guarantee of liberty of worship to the Romanists residing there. Therein she also failed; the Estates-General felt strong enough to withhold this concession. Yet the Archdukes and their subjects rejoiced at the peace. Bells were rung, bonfires were lit, a *Te Deum* was celebrated in all the churches.¹ It was a time of general thanksgiving. It seemed as if, in spite of their sufferings, the prophecy was to be fulfilled, and the reign of the Archdukes might yet be a time of calm and prosperity for the Netherlands.

¹ Isabel's "Correspondence," Navarrette, xliii. p. 159.

CHAPTER X

HENRY IV., GALLANT AND STATESMAN

The question of the Archdukes' successor—Henry IV. of France and the Princess of Condé—The Princess in Brussels—Henry IV.'s attempt to kidnap her—It fails—Henry's wrath—Preparation for war—The causes—The Cleves-Jülich succession question—Its importance—Relations of Protestants and Catholics in Germany—Assassination of Henry IV.—Marie de'Medici, the Regent, well disposed towards Spain—End of preparations for war—Coalition against Spain and the Empire at an end—Condé returns to France—Settlement of the Cleves-Jülich succession question

THE action of the King of Spain with regard to the truce with the Dutch showed only too well how personal was the interest which he took in the fate of the Netherlands. There was indeed no room for doubt in his mind, but that the Archdukes would remain childless; and that thus the provinces would return to the immediate dominion of Spain. The Infanta had also given up the hope of the heir for whom she so passionately longed. After the birth of the Spanish heir, she wrote to Lerma, "I think that I should go mad with joy at holding a son of my brother in my arms."¹ How much greater would be the joy were the child her own? For many years she did not give up hope, although she had not been married until she had long passed the age considered fitting for the marriage of Spanish women. The Infanta's hopefulness

¹ Infanta to Lerma, May 12th, 1601

surely offers a contradiction to the scurrilous tale, concerning the Archduke, related by Henry IV. of France, on the authority, it was said, of Albert's confessor ;—a "merriment" freely bandied about among the diplomats and statesmen of the courts of Europe.¹ It was an anecdote worthy of a coarse age, and of the free-spoken monarch who so amusingly recounted it.

Isabel, in common with the majority of her contemporaries, had great faith in the efficacy of pilgrimages, and long periods of prayer, in combating childlessness. As late as 1605, the Archdukes undertook a pilgrimage to Sicheim, near Diest, on the border of Brabant towards Liège, a shrine by which great miracles were reputed to be wrought. There they performed "nyne dayes of painfull devotion, for the obteyning of Issue."² Other means were not neglected. At Binche, her country retreat near Mons, in Hainault, the Infanta adopted a diet "for the obteyning of children, being persuaded to prove the Receipts which have been reported of great effect, of an olde blynde Phisition of Cambray, the w^{ch} dyett she is to continue for fortie dayes."³ But neither pilgrimages nor physic could avail.

Negotiations were at this time going forward simultaneously for the marriage of Philip III.'s baby daughter Anne, with the Dauphin of France, or with Henry, Prince of Wales.⁴ The Spanish Netherlands were offered as her dowry. Philip was, moreover, secretly inviting each of

¹ Cf. "Winwood's Memorials," i. p. 26. A private letter from Sir Henry Nevill, the Ambassador in Paris, to Mr Secretary Cecil, May 1st, 1599.

² Edmondes to Lord Salisbury, Aug. 28th, 1605, Record Office "State Papers, Foreign, Flanders," vol. vii.

³ Edmondes, Nov. 6th, 1605.

⁴ Winwood, ii. 273, Nov. 1606, and p. 160, Nov. 1605.

the prospective fathers-in-law to help him to win back the United Provinces, that their children might jointly rule over the whole of the Low Countries.¹ Provision was thus already being made for the Archdukes' successors; a proof that Philip III. considered that the Netherlands would revert to the crown, and cease to be independent, at no very distant date.

The Archdukes hoped that the truce with Holland would allow them a period of rest. Scarcely, however, had they settled down to the quiet pursuits of a country life, when their hospitality was invaded by guests, who threatened to bring war in their train.

On November 29th, 1609, an hour before dawn, the royal Prince Henry of Condé crossed the French frontier into Hainault, riding at full speed towards the town of Landrecies.² On his crupper behind him he carried his young and beautiful wife. The fury of Henry IV. of France pursued him, in an order that the fugitives should be followed and seized. This plan failing, an embassy extraordinary appeared before the Archdukes, entreating them to detain and place at the disposal of his Majesty the young Prince and his wife.

What wrong had Condé done, which so roused the ire of the Most Christian King? The story which he told the Archdukes was a simple one. At the beginning of the year, being then twenty-one years of age, he had sought in marriage Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency, the daughter of the Grand Constable of France, a girl of fifteen. But when the marriage-contract had already been signed, Condé, perceiving as he thought that his royal master was enamoured of the lady, offered to proceed no further with the match.

Motley, vol. iv.

² Villa, "A. Spinola," ch. xvii. pp. 258 *seq.*

At this, however, Henry was annoyed, and, reassuring Condé as to his own intentions, begged that the marriage might be completed. This was done in May 1609. After his marriage, in accordance with custom, Condé was commanded to bring his wife to court to pay her respects to the Queen. Before his marriage, Henry had promised Condé that he should be free to take his wife to his home or wherever he wished. But after the Prince had been at Fontainebleau for ten days Henry dropped his mask. He replied to Condé's request for leave to depart, that he must remain in attendance on the King, and the Princess of Condé on the Queen. Angry words passed between the two; and the King, finding Condé obdurate, tried first to bribe him by an offer of high court appointments. He next withheld Condé's pension, and declared any who lent the Prince money guilty of *lèse-majesté*. Both these devices failed; and the King, disguised in a false beard, had further unsuccessfully attempted to speak to his inamorata. He determined, therefore, to use force. Through the minister Sully, Condé was informed that if he did not bring his wife to the palace within ten days the King would send his provost to fetch her; while he would himself be provided with a lodging in the Bastille. Condé, in despair, determined on flight. Feigning obedience to the royal command, he obtained leave to fetch his wife from her dwelling near Soissons, and fled with her in all haste across the frontier.

The Archdukes, anxious above all to maintain the peace, which the Cleves-Jülich succession question already seemed to endanger, refused to receive the Prince of Condé. They, however, agreed that the

Princess should be left with her kinsman the Prince of Orange, in Brussels, while her husband departed for Cologne. The Archduke Albert was fearful of raising a new and terrible war. The importunities of the King of France nearly frightened him into relinquishing the Princess. But finally the advice of Spinola fortified him to resistance. Spinola declared that he would rather die than witness so disgraceful an action as would be the breach of the Archduke's word, given to Condé. It does not appear that the accusation brought against the Genoese commander,¹ that he was using this opportunity of raising conflict between France and the Netherlands in order to satisfy his greed of military glory, is justified. He had toiled to bring about peace, and he realized the need of it. But he was certainly not anxious to relinquish such valuable political pawns as Condé and his wife. Henry IV. had for years openly maintained in France numbers of Spanish fugitives, notably the arch-intriguer, Antonio Perez; and Spinola saw no reason why Condé should not find a ready refuge in Spanish dominions. Against the general voice at the court, his opinion at last prevailed; and in December Condé secretly returned to Brussels. Soon the Spanish court presented a changed front, and Condé's presence was openly acknowledged.

Then began a series of negotiations, in which the Archdukes, at the request of the King of France, acted as intermediaries, to persuade Condé to return to Paris. As, however, he firmly declared his intention of never setting foot in France again, while the present King was alive, Henry determined to fetch the

¹ By the Duke of Aumale.

lady. The Marquis of Cœuvre, the ambassador extraordinary sent to Brussels to negotiate with Condé, was ordered to kidnap her. The little Princess, wearied at the restraint of her kinsman's house, and disgusted with her husband for leaving her practically a prisoner, finally consented to the abduction. She was a docile creature, easily led, yet for a long time she hesitated. She was influenced by the wife of the French ambassador, and by an old nurse, through whom she secretly received letters from her father and the Duchess of Angoulême,¹ her aunt, and at whose dictation she wrote to her elderly lover. The Constable, moreover, with a strange conception of his daughter's honour, was making continual demands for her to the Archdukes. To these Albert replied that the Prince of Condé was alone the judge of this matter, and that when he was ordered by him to deliver the Princess, he would do so.

The plan of the abduction was carefully laid. At the last moment, through the indiscretion of the French King himself, some rumour of it came to Albert's ear. He determined at once to remove the Princess from the palace to the Infanta's lodgings, and thus forced the French ambassador to execute his mission before he was actually ready. That same night the Princess was to feign illness, and withdraw to her own apartment. During the supper hour the French would enter her chamber and let her down into the garden under her window by a silken ladder. Thence the Marquis of Cœuvre would convey her outside the

¹ The Duchess of Angoulême was the daughter of Henry II. of France, and Diana of Poitiers. She was thus probably very fitted to give advice in an affair of this kind.

walls of Brussels, and to the French frontier on horse-back.

That night the Orange palace in Brussels presented a curious appearance. At two o'clock in the morning, two companies of the Archduke's horse clattered into the great courtyard; while 500 armed burghers, sent, at the Prince of Orange's request, by the city magistrates, surrounded the place, and occupied the approaches. Through the throng collected outside, ran numerous conjectures; the most popular, that the King of France was already at the gate, and would fetch the lady himself.¹ Within, a stormy scene was enacted in the Princess's antechamber, which the Prince, bursting in upon his wife, found full of French nobles. Condé hurled invectives against the King of France and his ministers; whilst the French ambassador, abashed at the discovery, could only stammer that the plot was a fabrication of malicious tongues. The next day the Princess of Condé was removed to the royal palace, to be under Isabel's immediate guardianship. The French King cut a sorry figure. He had left Paris with four coaches to meet his ambassador. On the way to the frontier on February 15th, he met, not the Princess, but the messenger who brought the news of the failure of his plot.² This was due to Henry's own inability to conceal his blissful anticipation. His rage at being foiled in his desires knew no bounds. He ordered Condé to return to Paris, threatening him with life-long disgrace if he refused. Encouraged by Spinola and the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, who were disinclined to relinquish such a useful instrument of

¹ Henne and Wauters, "Ville de Bruxelles," ii. p. 20.

² Willert, "Heroes of the Nations."

annoyance, Condé disobeyed the King's command. Fearing for his safety, he hurried secretly to Milan, where he was sumptuously entertained by Fuentes, the Spanish viceroy.

It was the flight of Condé, and the failure to kidnap the Princess, which, in the opinion of his contemporaries, urged Henry to take up arms against the Habsburgs. The Infanta, in a letter to the Duke of Lerma,¹ declared that the air was full of rumours of war, which, to her great sorrow, the King's infatuation for this girl would bring upon them. Spinola spoke of the imminence of another Homeric war waged for a second Helen. Henry IV.'s minister, Jeannin, wrote to the Archdukes' ambassador, "Peace and war depend on whether the Princess is, or is not, given up."² Yet voluptuary as he was, it is doubtful whether, for the possession of the Princess of Condé alone, the King of France would have embarked on a war. His character as cynic and rake was such, that his contemporaries might well credit him with this single purpose. It is, however, probable that the irritation caused by this check on his pleasure only gave an impetus to a determination already taken. The necessity of taking a part in the decision of the Cleves-Jülich succession question, which the King urged as an explanation of his conduct, seemed to many only a pretext for opening a campaign. To Henry IV. it probably represented the result of a policy long pursued in preparation for the part which he had intended to play, should an opportunity offer such as that which now faced him.

In March 1609 John William, Duke of Cleves and Jülich, died. He left no male heirs, and the succession

¹ April 22nd, 1610.

² Willert.

was thus in dispute. The state of suppressed hostility, which had existed in the Empire ever since the so-called settlement of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, between the Catholic and Protestant states of Germany, made it impossible that either party should acquiesce quietly in the acquisition of so important a district by the opposing faction. The duchies of Cleves and Jülich, and the smaller territories united to them, lay along both banks of the lower Rhine. In the hands of a Catholic, such as the late duke, they connected the great bishoprics of Münster, Paderborn, and Hildesheim with the Rhenish ecclesiastical Electors of Cologne, Treves, and Mayence, and with the Spanish Netherlands. They also interrupted the communication between the Protestant Princes of Central Germany and the Dutch. The succession to these territories was thus a matter of importance to the Spanish Netherlands. Should Cleves and Jülich pass to a Protestant, the security of the Netherlands would be threatened, their enemies the Dutch would be greatly strengthened, possibly even the passage from Spain to the Netherlands would be endangered.

Duke John William's nearest heirs were the Elector of Brandenburg, whose wife was the daughter of the late Duke's eldest sister, and the Count Palatine of Neuburg, who had married a younger sister. Each urged his wife's claim. Both were Protestants. Foreseeing the probability of opposition on the part of the Emperor Rudolf, they determined to unite their forces, and jointly occupied the duchies. The Emperor, claiming the inheritances as male fiefs, cited the "Possessors," as Brandenburg and Neuburg were called, to appear before the Imperial Court. As they ignored

him, he sent a Catholic force under the Archduke Leopold, the vigorous Bishop of Passau, to take possession of the territory, pending the decision of the court. It seemed certain that neither the Protestant Princes, nor the Dutch, nor the King of France would tolerate the presence of this army. War, and such a war as would involve others besides the powers of the Empire, now seemed imminent.

The Archduke Albert, anxious for peace, strove to persuade the King of Spain to remain neutral. He already saw his territories wasted by the King of France. Convinced that Henry's hostility was actuated by one sole motive, he began to contemplate the sacrifice of the Princess of Condé and of his word to the Prince. Spinola, however, fortified his master's wavering spirit. He was collecting a force to join the Archduke Leopold, who was advancing to besiege Jülich. While he was preparing his troops, news arrived that the King of France claimed a passage through Luxemburg, which lay between the frontier of France and Jülich, and would take it by force if it were denied him.

Henry saw in the Cleves-Jülich succession dispute the opportunity which he had long sought, to humiliate the Habsburgs, and bring glory to France, by uniting with the Protestant Princes of Germany against the central authority of the Emperor. His design was in substance that which was successfully carried out, later in the century, by Cardinal Richelieu. His first idea was to support the Elector of Brandenburg,¹ who, filled with the visions of territorial aggrandisement which ever animated the Hohenzollern Princes, made

¹ Willert, "Heroes of the Nations."

a bid for French aid. The enforced agreement of the "Possessors" left Henry no option. He persuaded the United Provinces to break their truce with the Archdukes, and proceeded to raise German, Swiss, English, and Dutch levies. He was preparing a mighty coalition against the Habsburg power in Europe. Even James I. declared his readiness to join the Dutch and French, in defence of Protestant Germany, against the power of Austria and Spain, if his continental allies would begin the campaign.

In order that Philip III. should be unable to render any assistance to the Emperor, he was to be attacked both in Spain and in Italy. Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, with an eye on the duchy of Milan, was now the steadfast ally of the King of France. Henry hoped to gain the adherence of Venice, by an offer of the possession of the island of Sicily, if the Spaniards could be driven out of the peninsula. The Pope was to be bribed by the prospect of annexing the Kingdom of Naples to the patrimony of St Peter. Moreover, Henry IV., realizing that his alliance with the Protestant Princes might seem akin to a lapse from the faith, offered to support as King of the Romans, and successor to the Imperial dignity, the Duke of Bavaria, whose orthodoxy was unimpeachable.¹

Three French armies were to be hurled against the Habsburgs. One was to cross the Pyrenees, in the hope of getting help from the Moriscoes of Aragon and Catalonia, who had been driven from their homes into the mountains. A second army lay in Dauphiné, ready to co-operate with the Duke of Savoy and Venice in the conquest of the Milanese. The third and largest army

¹ Willert.

lay at Châlons-sur-Marne, in the county of Champagne. In conjunction with the English and Dutch contingents, and the troops promised by the German Protestant Union, this force, under the leadership of King Henry himself, was to reduce the Cleves-Jülich territory.

On May 10th, 1610, the King demanded permission to lead his troops across Luxemburg. This, in spite of Spinola's protests, the Archduke granted. It seemed as if nothing could now avert a European war; when, on May 14th, Henry IV. was struck down in the streets of Paris by the assassin, Ravallac.

The Archdukes expressed great horror at the deed, but to Isabel the French King's death seemed an act of Providence.¹ The combination against the Habsburgs, of which he had been the head, immediately fell to pieces. The new government in France, under the regency of Marie de' Medici, Henry IV.'s widow, was, for the moment, anxious to be on good terms with Spain and with the Archdukes. The army was disbanded; and to remove all pretexts for international conflict, the Prince of Condé was recalled. He returned to Brussels, not, however, to fetch his wife, but to express his gratitude to the Archdukes and to the King of Spain. Busy tongues were whispering to him, that, if he were rid of his wife, he might marry a royal princess—a daughter of the man who had striven so hard to ruin him. In spite of Isabel's attempts to bring the two together, and his wife's plea for forgiveness, Condé left for France without her. The Infanta had a genuine regard for the Princess, who seemed to her like an innocent little novice, in the hands of most worldly

¹ Letter to Lerma, June 19th, 1610, "Correspondencia."

advisers.¹ The thought of the elderly gallant pursuing the girl of fifteen, caused her much mirth, until she remembered what disastrous results this infatuation might have for the Netherlands.

Both Isabel and her husband were now very anxious to be rid of any further responsibility for the Princess. In the company of her elder sister, to whose care she was resigned, the Princess of Condé paid a last visit to the Infanta at her country house at Marimont. Isabel improved the occasion by delivering a severe lecture.² She received a tearful promise that she should hear how the Princess conducted herself in future, and with a sigh of relief she saw this source of anxiety removed from her existence.

The Cleves-Jülich succession question was, to all appearance, settled without any grave difficulties, in the presence of an indifferent France averse to war. After the death of Henry IV., Maurice of Nassau, with Dutch troops, occupied Jülich and expelled the Imperialists. The Emperor was too weak, too greatly harassed by troubles in his own hereditary dominions to offer any resistance, and for a while the matter rested. Soon a new difficulty arose. The "Possessors" quarrelled. It was suggested that a marriage between the two heirs, the young Palatine of Neuburg, and the daughter of the Elector of Brandenburg, might best dispose of their differences. The young Count, however, became a Catholic and contracted a marriage with the daughter of the protagonist on the side of German Catholicism, the Duke of Bavaria. The Elector of Brandenburg, on the other hand, strongly embraced Calvinism. Finally the Elector appealed for

¹ "Correspondencia," to Lerma, April 22nd, and July 26th, 1610.

² "Correspondencia," Infanta to Lerma, July 26th, pp. 219 and 223.

help to the Dutch, while the Archdukes could not avoid helping the Catholic Neuburg. Hostilities broke out, and Maurice of Nassau and Ambrose Spinola once more faced each other in arms. But neither the Catholic League nor the Protestant Union in the Empire was able to lend any aid. At the Treaty of Xanten in 1614, by the intercession of France and England, a division of the territories of Cleves and Jülich was effected between the two claimants, and war was averted for the time being.

Yet it was, none the less, obvious that a conflict was inevitable. The state of affairs created in the Empire by the Peace of Augsburg, fifty years earlier, was being shown to be untenable. Rudolf, who had been Emperor for thirty years, was a cipher, incapable of handling the reins of government.

During his reign a series of disputes had arisen between Protestants and Catholics, not important in themselves, but which had the accumulative effect of producing civil war. The readiness with which Henry IV. had taken up arms in the Cleves-Jülich question showed how unlikely it was that the Imperial vassals would be left to combat their overlord the Emperor, unaided from without. Should a leader arise, outside the Empire, posing, as Henry IV. had been ready to pose, as the champion of the Protestant party in Germany against the Catholic Emperor, no truce however hollow would serve to avert a European conflagration.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARCHDUKES AND THEIR SUBJECTS

The daily life of the Archdukes—The increase of religious establishments—Power of the ecclesiastics—The belief in witchcraft—The Archdukes and the administration of justice; the "Edit Perpétuel"—Ordinances dealing with the reform of finances—Attempts to revive agriculture and commerce—Draining and canals—Pawnbrokers—Laws against import, in the interests of home manufacture—The Archduke and the Empire, 1612—Isabel's pleasures—Her delight in outdoor life—Her intercourse with the people of Brussels—The procession of the "ommeegang" and the shooting by the Grand Serment—Isabel victorious; she becomes "Reine papegay"—Troubles of the Archdukes with the city of Brussels—The "guerre de gigot"—Financial difficulties—The new Imperial election—Ferdinand II. becomes Emperor—Death of the Archduke Albert; his character and tastes—His patronage of artists—Rubens and seventeenth century Flemish art—The married life of Isabel and Albert

NOTWITHSTANDING the pomp which accompanied all ceremonies, and the reputed great extravagance of the court, the mode of life of the Archdukes was not luxurious. In accordance with the desires of their subjects, the court was kept on the same footing as the courts of the Dukes of Brabant of past ages.¹ But Spanish etiquette regulated it to minute details, from which no departure was made. The Archdukes arose at the same hour every morning. They heard mass separately, except on public occasions,

¹ Hagemans, "Relations inédites d'Ambassadeurs Vénitiens Voyage. . . par Giorgio Justiniani," 1605, pp. 68 *seq.*

when they attended service together, the Infanta occupying the chief seat on the dais. In the chapel every dignitary, the ambassadors of foreign Powers, the Grandees of Spain, the Knights of the Golden Fleece, had each his allotted place. It is perhaps of interest to know that the music in the chapel, which called forth great admiration from visitors, was supplied by three very fine English musicians. At dinner the Archduke was served by his gentlemen, and Isabel by her ladies. After retiring for two hours, Albert would give audience, sometimes accompanied by the Infanta. Though she was nominally the first person in the state, yet during his lifetime Isabel left many of the ordinary affairs of government in her husband's hands. Later, after his death, she divided the hours of the day more minutely, regulating her life according to a fixed plan, as her father had done.

Albert retained all his life the tastes of his youth. It was said of him that never, even when in camp, did he miss hearing mass. Pilgrimages, the building of churches, the collection of relics, the society of monks and priests, formed his chief pleasures. Churches, chapels and convents arose in every part of the country, and were richly endowed. During the first year of the Twelve Years' Truce, the Archdukes built at Montaigu, near Diest in Brabant, a church, the treasury of which still bears witness to the favour of successive rulers. Every year Albert and Isabel spent nine days there in devotion, and bestowed some rich present. Ambrose Spinola also brought yearly to the shrine a fixed sum from the amount taken in prizes from the enemies of Spain.¹

¹ Brussels Archives, "Correspondence," Infanta to K. of Spain, Feb. 19th 1631, vol xxix.

Vilvorde and Hal, the latter, then as now, celebrated as a resort of pilgrims, on account of the miracle-working image of the Virgin in the Church of Notre-Dame, were the scenes of similar devotions and the objects of gifts. Grants of land were made to the cathedral churches of Brussels, Antwerp and Louvain. The Archdukes organized processions, lasting for many days, in which the nobles and gentry would take part, clad in sackcloth, and flagellating themselves.¹ In times of trouble the images of the saints were carried in procession; while Albert and Isabel followed, as well as the humblest citizens, bareheaded, carrying torches. It does not appear that Isabel shared her husband's love of relics. Albert collected them from Germany, Holland and England. Every year in July, he would leave his pleasures at Marimont, in order to take part in the processions of the bodies of eight saints, which he kept at Binche near by.²

Such a recrudescence of religious observances presented a golden opportunity for monks and nuns. They flocked into the Netherlands, from all countries, to shelter under the wing of the rulers. Isabel encouraged the ladies of her court to take the veil, especially if they had fortunes, with which to endow new establishments.³ The Jesuits remained ever Albert's favourites. Their doctrines were taught at the universities of Louvain and Douai. A new college was founded for them at Malines. They exercised a censorship over the press, and policed libraries.⁴ In their hands, more especially, were the trials of persons accused of witchcraft.

¹ Blaes, "Etudes historiques."

² "L'histoire de l'Archiduc Albert."

³ "Correspondencia," Nov. 19th, 1623, to Lerma.

⁴ Blaes, "Etudes historiques."

The Infanta had, as a child, been a frequent visitor at the convent of the Descalced or Barefoot Carmelite nuns founded by her aunt, Princess Juana of Portugal, in Madrid. They were disciples of Saint Theresa, who, under her guidance, observed a more austere rule than the Carmelites, from whose rule they departed, and had been constituted a separate order by papal brief. Isabel summoned to Brussels Sister Anne de Jésus, the companion of Saint Theresa. She established a convent of Barefoot nuns close to the palace, where she could visit them through a private door leading into the park, which adjoined the palace. At the same time Albert established the monks of the same order in Brussels, under the rule of an Aragonese monk, Dominic Ruzzola.

If Roman Catholicism were more firmly rooted by these means, it was a narrower, more mystic and ceremonial faith which held sway. Therein the Netherlands shared the fate of all the countries, which came under the influence of the Catholic Reaction, which followed the Reformation movement. From the decrees of the Council of Trent issued a Church, free from doubt and division, purified in morals and in dogma, but standing on a narrower basis than the pre-Reformation Church. Not only was the jurisdiction of the Roman Church curtailed by the breaking off of the Protestant countries, but, by the rigid pronouncements of the Council of Trent with regard to dogma and government, the Church retained a very sharply defined and circumscribed domain. The chief instruments of the Roman Church, thus reformed, was the Society of Jesus; the weapons which she wielded, the Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books, revised by the Council of Trent. But the nobility and the people of the Netherlands had always

been averse to persecution for the sake of religion. The opposition roused by the Inquisitorial excesses in the time of Alba, made a repetition of the policy impossible, even had it been considered either necessary or desirable by the rulers.

Such executions as took place during the reign of Albert and Isabel were generally on a charge of witchcraft,¹ and not of heresy. For these executions the Jesuits cannot be held altogether responsible, although no doubt they inculcated a belief in the power of the devil. The seventeenth century witnessed the growth of superstition throughout Europe. The belief in the possibility of compacts with the devil was common to theologians of all creeds. The tortures applied to extract confession from supposed witches were as cruel in Presbyterian Scotland as in any Roman Catholic country. Death by burning was frequently the penalty of condemnation. In England, under the Commonwealth, there was a great increase of persecution, especially in the Puritan eastern counties. Hundreds of suspects suffered torture; while in 1645-6 nearly forty persons were executed in one Suffolk town alone. Even Sir Francis Bacon admitted the possibility of witchcraft. And many years after the death of the Infanta, Sir Thomas Browne, the sympathetic and tolerant author of the "*Religio Medici*," gave evidence before Sir Matthew Hale, the Lord Chief-Justice of England, which helped to send two women to their death, on a charge of sorcery. The Archdukes, therefore, in giving their sanction to the executions for witchcraft, which took place during their reign, were

¹ Blaes, "*Etudes historiques*," declares that they numbered 300 a year. The statement appears to lack corroboration.

not less rational than those who are esteemed among the most enlightened men of their age.

While the largess granted to ecclesiastics constituted a drain on their resources, the Archdukes did not neglect the more worldly interests of their subjects. During the truce, a mass of ordinances was issued dealing with every question of justice and finance, of agriculture and commerce. Order began to grow out of chaos. The suffering Netherlands, under the healing influence of peace, began to see the return of prosperity.

One of the great difficulties in the administration of justice lay in the multiplicity of local laws. Every town, almost every village, had its own privileges and customs.¹ Confusion and delay were the results of this diversity. Charles V. had striven to remedy it, and had formulated the general provisions of a Civil Code. The Archdukes carried on his work. The local privileges and customs were examined by the Central Council. On July 12th, 1611, Isabel and Albert issued their "Edit perpétuel," consisting of forty-seven articles, in which a new code appeared, and a measure of order and uniformity succeeded to the previous confusion.

The Archdukes then proceeded to attack the disorder in their own and the municipal finances. Among the charges which burdened their revenues, was the payment of pensioners of all nations, who were thought to have deserved their bounty.² These numbered some hundreds yearly, and ceaseless applications poured in from all sides. The Archdukes in 1613 determined

¹ Montpleinchamp, p. 525-6, "Collection de Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de Belgique."

² Winwood, vol. iii., Trumbull to Winwood, June 25th, 1613.

to refuse all but a few of these pensions; and in this way it was estimated that they saved from 700,000 to 800,000 crowns a year. A number of ordinances further dealt with municipal finances. Many of the towns were in great distress. Antwerp, especially, had suffered great losses during the war. The governing body were now unable to pay the interest on the debts incurred, or even to manage the policing of the city. An ordinance, which held until the time of the French occupation of the Netherlands, specified the revenues of the city, regulated the taxes, and forbade any further loans.

Every effort was made to facilitate the revival of agriculture and commerce. Large sums were spent in developing agricultural resources. Roads were made, and canals constructed. A series of canals connected the places along the coast of Flanders, Dunkirk, Nieuport and Ostend; while two, projected inland between Ostend and Bruges, and between Bruges and Ghent, were begun at the expense of the Flemings.¹ Commerce had been greatly hampered by the expense of obtaining loans. For many centuries the money-lenders, who appear to have been chiefly Lombards, had been advancing money at the rate of from 33 to 66 per cent. The Archdukes determined to facilitate borrowing, so necessary in commercial countries, by the establishment of pawnbrokers. In 1617 Albert laid the foundation stone of the first pawnbroker's establishment in Brussels. The example was followed gradually by Antwerp, Malines, Ghent, and many other of the larger towns. The rate of interest ceased to be exorbitant. By degrees it was reduced to 15 per

¹ Nameche, "Cours d'histoire nationale," vol. xxii. p. 283.

cent., and by the time the Infanta died to 10 per cent.

The Estates-General of 1600 had laid down as a general principle, that anything which could in any way prejudice or hinder industry and commerce was to be prohibited. The application of this principle was left to the Archdukes. They acted in accordance with the economic theory of the day, in imposing prohibitions on the export and import of various articles in the interest of the home industry. The manufacture of cloth was still by far the most important industry in the country. For many reasons, but chiefly on account of the decline in the population, the industry was waning. In order to encourage home manufacture, the import of cloth was, by frequent enactments throughout the reign, forbidden.¹ These measures were largely directed against the English manufacturers, who had before, early in the fifteenth century, paralyzed the cloth industry in the great Flemish cities. The English were now reinforced by many of the finest artisans, who had fled from Flanders before and during the wars of the sixteenth century. These constituted an irreparable loss to the Netherlands, which the prohibition of foreign cloths could not supply. Other enactments prohibited the export of flax, in the interests of the linen manufacturers. A decree was also promulgated, regulating in great detail the manufacture of textiles, forbidding the use of certain materials, and instituting a system of domiciliary inspection for the purpose of enforcing the regulations.

But commerce did not revive as much as the Arch-

¹ See Winwood, iii, *passim*.

dukes had hoped. During the twenty years preceding the Twelve Years' Truce, Amsterdam had been steadily growing in importance as a world-mart, while Antwerp had declined. While the population of Antwerp decreased, as a result of war and emigration, that of Amsterdam was increasing.¹ The voyages of the Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, had added vastly to the wealth of the cities of Holland. More and more the trade of the world centred in Amsterdam. This was due primarily to one cause. When Parma recovered Antwerp for Spain in 1585, the forts Lillo and Liefkenshoek, one in Flanders, one in Brabant, in the mouth of the Scheldt, remained in the hands of the United Provinces. By levying heavy taxes the Provinces effectually closed the Scheldt, and diverted trade to Holland and Zeeland. At the time of the making of the Twelve Years' Truce, President Richardot strove vainly to reclaim the freedom of the Scheldt. The United Provinces resisted, and the Archdukes, in their anxiety for peace, did not uphold their deputy. It was a matter of vital importance for the welfare of their provinces, which they relinquished. The Scheldt remained closed until the French Revolution, and Antwerp ceased to be of great importance in the trade of the world.

During these years, indeed almost from his youth upwards, the Archduke suffered greatly from gout. He had always led a very abstemious life, yet he was not spared the hereditary ailment of his family. In spite of his sufferings, which grew to be very acute, and even dangerous, he was alleged to be straining every nerve to obtain the Imperial dignity

¹ Hagemans, "*Relations inédites*," etc.

during the intrigue which preceded the death of the Emperor Rudolf in 1612. The accounts of his negotiations vary. On the one hand, it is said that the Imperial Crown was offered to him, and that he refused it. Yet Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador in Venice at the time, declared that the King of Spain was sending Spinola to the Imperial Diet, with a large sum of money to negotiate the matter.¹ According to yet another account, Albert's claim was supported by the ecclesiastical electors, but the Spanish Government disliked the project.

Whatever may have been her husband's ambitions, Isabel received the news of the coronation of Matthias, Albert's brother, who succeeded Rudolf, with a feeling of profound thankfulness. The position of the Emperor was, at the time, the least enviable of all those held by the rulers of Europe. The peace with the United Provinces had once more brought Isabel the life which she enjoyed, and she had no wish to change it. Her delight was in outdoor pursuits. As children she and her sister had taken especial pleasure in gardening, and had delighted their father with gifts from their little plot of ground. At Brussels she had her own little garden, intersected by tiny canals, her little Venice, as it was called, which she cultivated with her own hands.² Every year she retired for a time to Hainault, to Binche, or to the charming little residence at Marimont near by, which was so small that the court ladies could not find room to perform their toilets. Several months were passed in hunting, of which Isabel was passionately fond, until old age overtook her. All animals, from

¹ Winwood, iii. 283.

² Hagemans.

the boar to the rabbit, were sought with equal zest. Her letters are full of stories of quaint adventures and mishaps, and breathe a great joy in this "life-giving" exercise. The picture which they present of the Infanta, creeping on all fours through the dense undergrowth, sometimes for hours at a time, is more in keeping with our conception of sport, than with the more dignified, but less "sporting" Spanish method of hunting. Isabel could also, for the amusement of her brother, tell a tale *against* herself—surely a severe test of the sportswoman. The hours not devoted to exercise were, in the country, also spent out of doors. At Marimont she would transact her correspondence, sitting in a summer-house in the garden. Etiquette was relaxed, and Isabel was frequently interrupted by visits from her country neighbours who came without fear of being denied admittance. This seemed to her the ideal life, to live in the country, invigorated by exercise, and surrounded by a few chosen friends.¹

The cities of Belgium retained, during many centuries, the celebration of their annual "kermesse" or fair, the monument of departed communal glory. The day of the fair was essentially a time of free intercourse between all ranks of the community, a day of merry-making and easy good-fellowship. In Brussels, the "Ommegang" or "procession du Sablon," held on the same day, heightened the reputation of the kermesse.² The procession of Our Lady of the Sablon originated, like many others in Brussels, as a purely religious ceremony. It was gradually secular-

¹ "Correspondencia," 1609-10, esp. Nov. 12th, 1610.

² Wauters in "Revue de Bruxelles," June 1841, pp. 32 *seq.* Cf. also "La Belgique Communale," 1848, pp. 484 *seq.*

ized, and became the most important procession of the city. The Great Company of cross-bowmen, the so-called "Grand Serment," contributed to the upkeep of the Church of the Sablon. Therefore, as early as the fourteenth century, the company received a grant for a feast on the day of the "Ommegang." And soon not only the Great Company, but also the other military companies of the city, as well as the trade guilds, the merchants, lawyers, magistrates, and many bodies of clergy, took part in the procession.

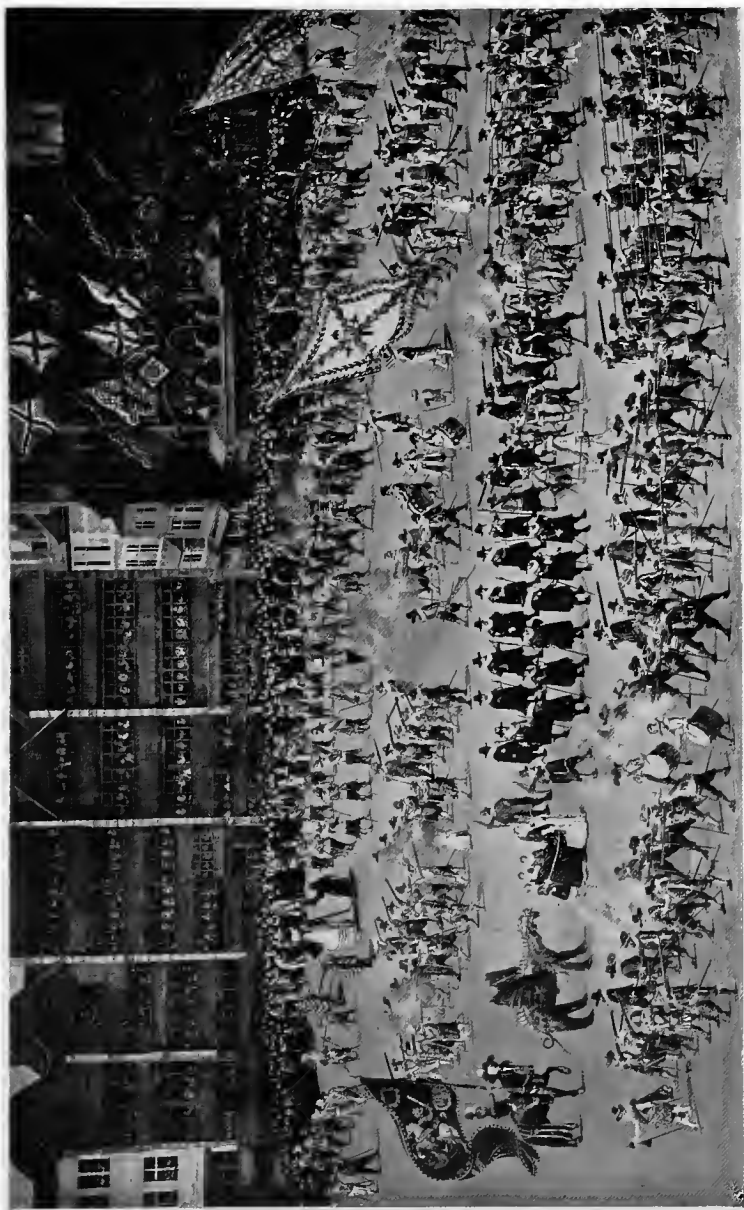
The "ommegang" reached the height of its glory under the government of Charles V. On the Sunday before Pentecost, the miraculous statue of the Virgin in the Church of the Sablon was carried through the streets of the city. The procession was headed by the "Sermens," or military companies, in their colours; the great and lesser company of cross-bowmen, the archers, the arquebusiers, and the fencers, all in festal array. There followed the trade guilds, to the number of fifty-two, the deans of the guilds clad in their scarlet robes of ceremony. Youths on horseback, each attended by a standard-bearer and a suite, represented the Dukes of Brabant down to the reigning Duke. Triumphal cars on which were represented religious and legendary scenes, Christian and pagan—incidents in the lives of Christ and the Virgin, tales from the Greek mythology—formed part of the procession. Dominicans, Carmelites and Franciscans, the clergy of the Chapter of Sainte Gudule with the shrine, and finally the clergy of the Sablon bearing the image of the Virgin, testified to the religious origin of the procession. There were not wanting those elements which more especially appealed to the general populace; giants and grotesque animals, enormous

griffons, horses and camels ridden by angels, serpents spouting fire, as we see them in the pictures of van Alsloot. In the nineteenth century, the "ommegang" consisted solely of these popular figures, a mere fragment of the ceremony in which the glory and strength of the capital were formerly displayed.

During the Archdukes' reign, the "ommegang" recovered much of the splendour which it had latterly lost. The festivities began with the issue of the statue of the Virgin, borne by barefooted city watchmen from the Sablon Church. The procession as it passed through the streets was continually swelled; and when it reached the great Market Place, its length was so great that it required several hours to defile before the town-hall, from the windows of which the court watched the gay throng. By noon the procession regained the Sablon and restored the statue. A mystery play, acted on a stage erected in the Market Place, occupied the afternoon; and general gaieties brought the day to a close. Such trade guilds as still had the means gave banquets, the military companies feasted their brethren from neighbouring towns; while the Great Company of cross-bowmen elected their new deans and members, and held their famous shooting contests.

It was on an occasion such as this that Isabel delighted to mix with her people. The Archduke, however, always withdrew into his Spanish reserve; and as he grew more gouty he contented himself with watching the procession from a house situated over the graveyard of the Sablon. Isabel had been enrolled as a member both of the Great Company of cross-bowmen and of the company of arquebusiers.¹ She even took part in their shooting;

¹ Morgues, "Portrait en petit d'Isabelle" (1650).



PROCESSION IN THE GRAND PLACE, BRUSSELS

VAN ALSLOOT

South Kensington Museum

and on May 15th, 1615, she became queen of the fraternity of cross-bowmen, "Reine papegay," having shot the bird affixed to the spire of the Sablon Church. Great was the rejoicing. The regent of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria, Charles V.'s aunt, and Philip II., had each won the shooting by the hand of a delegate. The Infanta was the first sovereign who had achieved success with her own hand. She was conducted to the high altar of the Sablon Church, and decorated with a baldrick. Thence she was led in triumph to the Maison du Roi, in the Market Place, amid the applause of an enthusiastic populace. The rejoicings lasted three days. The magistrates of the city voted Isabel a grant of 25,000 florins. The Great Company resolved to suspend their annual shooting during the Infanta's life, that she might remain their queen until her death. After her death, they refused for some years to restore the contest, to mark their protest that her funeral obsequies had not been fittingly celebrated.

Isabel responded to the courtesies of the cross-bowmen in true Flemish fashion. Enthusiasm knew no bounds, when the Princess, raising a foaming bumper, drank to the prosperity of her fraternity in the presence of the throng of merry-makers. She presented each of the hundred members of her company with a suit consisting of red hose and blue satin doublet, and with another in the yellow colour, called by her name. Later, she built the fraternity a meeting-hall. With the money granted to her by the Commune, she gave a dowry of 200 florins to six young girls yearly. They were to be of poor and honest parents; three the children of servants of the Court, or of members of the com-

panies ; and three, either the orphans of members of the companies, or the children of burghers. These girls, dressed in white, and with crowns of convolvulus on their heads, were to take part, two years in succession, in a new procession instituted by the Infanta. This procession, which, as well as Isabel's triumph in the shooting contest, was depicted by the painter Sallaert, marched, on the Monday of Pentecost, around the Sablon Church, and the girls were hence known as the "Pucelles du Sablon." But the expense was great, and the girls made bad use of their dowries ; and soon the institution underwent great modifications.

The relations of the Archdukes and their capital were not invariably of so friendly a nature. On one occasion shooting in Brussels threatened to be of a far more serious kind than that in which Isabel had taken a part. The financial condition of the municipality was growing ever worse. Not the least of the expenses of the citizens were the subsidies, which they had for years granted to the ever-increasing number of religious corporations within their walls. They had, moreover, been obliged to lodge not only soldiers, but ambassadors, prelates, and knights of the Fleece. This obligation the Archdukes in 1614 commuted for an annual quit-rent of 5000 florins ; and billeting in the capital for a time ceased.

Yet a dull discontent reigned, more especially, it would seem, among the artisans. The rulers ascribed it to the spread of Calvinistic doctrines, which had left deep roots in Brussels.¹ While the Archduke's Grand Almoner daily distributed large sums of money, to relieve distress, measures were taken to suppress the

¹ Henne and Wauters, quoting Bentivoglio.

dissemination of the troublesome heretical teaching. An ordinance was, in 1618, issued by the magistrates, forbidding artisans to receive apprentices without first having presented them to the heads of the trade guilds. If this precaution were not taken, young men insinuated themselves into trades, it was said, whose nationality and parentage were unknown, and spread heresy abroad among their fellow-workers.

In 1619 the troubles in Brussels came to a head. The Nations, who constituted the third member in the government of the city, had been deprived of certain of their privileges. As a protest they refused their consent to a certain tax, or "gigot" as it was called, which the Archduke had demanded. A tumult arose; and in this Albert thought that he recognized a Calvinist revolt. He was embittered by illness; and allowed his advisers to persuade him to call out the garrisons of Flanders, Gueldres and Luxemburg against the citizens, who as yet had not shown any intention of raising a single soldier. The magistrates were ordered to receive and lodge the troops, who were gathering around the city. They hastened to side with the court, and the Nations, finding themselves deserted, were forced into submission. They consented to raise the subsidy, about which the whole trouble had arisen. The Archduke would now gladly have withdrawn his troops. But it was too late. They had already concentrated. On September 23rd, 2000 German troops entered Brussels. The Archduke from Marimont had hurled threats against the city, and probably had meant to strike a heavy blow. He could not strike where there was no resistance.

When the troops entered Brussels, the shops were closed, the streets deserted, the church-bells were silent.

The indignation against the magistrates, who had bowed to the court, was great. But no arm was raised against the foreign troops. The Dutch fleet, which was cruising near Antwerp, withdrew in disappointment on learning the issue of what the United Provinces had hoped would be a revolt from which they might benefit. The Archduke did not hesitate to punish the Nations for the trouble which they had occasioned. Some of the more autocratic of his ministers proposed their suppression as the third member of the city. But it was thought that such an action would lead to a struggle, of which the result might be formidable. Albert therefore issued an ordinance which reproduced the principal regulations of Charles V.'s reign with regard to the capital, but deprived the Nations of one of their cherished rights.

As if to mitigate the harshness of this measure, the Archduke appointed a commission to remedy the abuses which, according to the complaints of the Nations, had grown up in the economic administration of the city. So great was the indignation of the Nations at the treatment which they had received, that they refused for some time to appoint their deputies on a commission which they had themselves solicited. Six of their number were subsequently banished, as having instigated this resistance to the will of the sovereigns. For a year they remained in exile, in spite of the intervention of Isabel's confessor, Andrew A. Soto, on their behalf. Finally, it is said, the wives of the exiles came to plead for them on Innocents' Day, and Albert and Isabel, "remembering the baneful result of the wrath of Herod,"¹ yielded to their entreaties. The soldiers left

¹ De Wael, quoted by Henne and Wauters.

the city and the exiles returned; and thus ended the "guerre de gigot," as it was contemptuously called. The Archdukes had gained their point, but not without exciting much bad feeling. They increased the burden of their capital, by demanding a high sum, for the exemption from the lodging of foreign troops who were brought in to quell the resistance of the native population. The deficit in the city revenues rose enormously, and recourse was had to the expedient, ruinous at the time, of borrowing. Albert's action in this matter was not consistent with the lofty conception of justice, which his biographers attribute to him. His mind was perhaps obscured by the disease which was gradually consuming him.

While Albert was pouring out the vials of his wrath against the citizens who refused him a subsidy, vast sums were being spent on the entertainment of the ambassadors, who came to receive the Archdukes' condolence on the death of the Emperor Matthias, and their congratulations, on the succession of the Emperor Ferdinand. If Albert wished for the Imperial Crown when his brother Rudolf died, he could hardly desire it now. He was himself far weaker, and the difficulties which beset the Empire were far more formidable in 1619 than they were in 1612. He readily supported the claim of his forceful young cousin Ferdinand of Styria. He transferred to the new Emperor, moreover, the Archduchy of Austria and the annexed territories, hereditary in the family of Habsburg, which he had inherited from his brother.

The last two years of the Archduke's life were overshadowed by great suffering. He was so worn by disease, that his life was many times despaired

of. During the last months of his life he was attacked by a fever which never left him.¹ He died on July 13th, 1621, in the arms of his friend and counsellor, Dominic, the Carmelite, who had the previous year been present at the battle of Prague, where the new Emperor had won his first victory in the struggle of the Thirty Years' War. He arrived from Germany only just in time to receive Albert's dying breath.² The Archduke requested that he might be buried in the garb of a Franciscan; he also provided for many thousand masses to be sung for the repose of his soul. For six weeks after his death, during three hours daily, the church bells tolled throughout the city. Albert's body lay in a leaden coffin at the palace, and it was not until eight months after his death that his funeral obsequies were celebrated; and the remains of the Archduke were transferred to the cathedral of Sainte Gudule.

Great pomp accompanied the funeral rites, which occupied a whole day. The Papal nuncio, and the Spanish ambassador (the latter, alone of all men present, covered, as representing the King of Spain), walked behind the funeral chariot from the palace to the cathedral. Knights of the Fleece, court officials, monks and merchants followed them in a throng.³ Thousands of citizens, torches in their hands, lined the roads, which displayed black hangings and the Archduke's armorial bearings. In the cathedral, of which black coverings and myriads of burning candles intensified the solemn aspect, an unseemly dispute took place. The Arch-

¹ A. Villa, "Spinola," p. 397, note (2).

² Trumbull to Calvert, Record Office, "S.P., Flanders," vol. xiv. p. 356.

³ "L'histoire de l'Archiduc Albert."

bishop of Malines and the Bishop of Cambrai both claimed the honour of conducting the funeral service. The quarrel was finally decided in favour of the Archbishop of Malines, as Primate of the Netherlands. The Abbot d'Orval, subsequently Albert's biographer, pronounced the funeral oration.

The funeral of the Archduke Albert, which so much resembled other ceremonies of the kind, is memorable only as the last occasion on which the magnificence of the Court of Brussels was displayed. Isabel desired that the same pomp should accompany her own interment. But at her death the finances of the state could not bear the strain. And it was not until seventeen years after her death that the remains of the Infanta were deposited beside those of her husband in the cathedral of Sainte Gudule.

Albert had striven with all his might to fulfil the hopes that were entertained at his coming to the Netherlands. That he did not altogether succeed was due more to the extraordinary difficulty of his position than to deficiencies in his character. He was innately honourable, and felt keenly a desire for the good of his subjects. He had considered their interests, in the overtures which he made for peace, to the detriment (according to the notions of the time) of his own personal dignity. He was at his best in the introduction of the simpler kind of domestic reforms. Important and beneficial modifications in administration he could make. His slow and somewhat timid habit of mind was opposed to radical alterations. In the field also, though he showed great personal courage, and some ability as a commander, he lacked initiative. His habitual irresolution brought him under the influence of men of stronger

character than his own, of his confessor, the Dominican Iñigo de Brizuela, of Ambrose Spinola, and his Spanish secretary Mancicidor.

Albert's personal tastes resembled those of his master and model, Philip II. He retained all his life the pleasure in reading which had been so marked a characteristic of his childhood. A lengthy correspondence¹ passed between the court, and Balthazar Moretus, the famous printer of Antwerp, by whom books were prepared for Albert according to his liking. Every year he required a list of the books which were brought to the great fair at Frankfort; and in the margin he marked those which were to be bought for his use. The Archduke understood and keenly appreciated the work of artists and architects. At his order the ancient villa of the Dukes of Brabant in the beautiful park of Tervueren at a short distance from Brussels was reconstructed. For this work he summoned from Italy Wenceslas Coeberger, famous as painter, architect and mathematician.² Albert became his pupil in mathematics; and by a curious agglomeration of offices, Coeberger became official architect, engineer, numismatist and painter, besides holding the position of superintendent of castles and fortifications. His work like that of other contemporary artists covered many fields. The chapel of Saint Hubert at Tervueren, and the pilgrimage-church at Montaigu remain the most interesting of his architectural work. Coeberger wrote on painting, sculpture and architecture. He further found work in the draining of the marshes in Flanders, and in the organization of the pawn-broking establishments founded by the Archdukes.

¹ Brussels Archives.

² Du Jardin "l'Art Flamand," vol. ii.

Albert was an enthusiastic patron of artists. In his day the rulers of the Netherlands had not yet become collectors of pictures, as they did later. Albert gathered together at Tervueren, the favourite resort of the court for festivals and hunting parties, a collection which was the admiration of his contemporaries. It has long since been dispersed, and no description of it exists. The Archduke appears, however, to have possessed, besides the works of living artists, masterpieces of many of the earlier Flemish and German artists, of Memling, Quentin Matsys, Jan Mabuse and Jerome Bosch, Dürer and Holbein.¹

In 1609, at the time of the making of the Twelve Years' Truce, the painter Rubens was in Antwerp, whither he had returned from his Italian travels, to see his dying mother. No doubt Rubens was made known to his rulers by his master Otto Venius, the greatest Flemish painter of his day, who was high in the favour of both Parma and the Archduke Albert. While he was in Italy, Rubens had painted for Albert some altar pictures for the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem in Rome, of which the Archduke had been cardinal. Albert had long desired the return of the Flemish painter to his dominions. A few months after the declaration of peace, in September 1609, he offered him the post of court-painter. Rubens had intended to return to Italy, where he was attached to the court of the Duke of Mantua. But the offer of this high position, and his marriage with Isabel Brandt, the daughter of the recorder of Antwerp, riveted him to the Netherlands, and henceforth his life was passed in the service of Albert and Isabel.

¹ See Wauters "Environs de Bruxelles," iii p. 380-400.

With the settlement of Rubens in Antwerp begins the period in which Flemish art reached its greatest splendour. Since the fifteenth century, when Jan van Eyck had been court-painter to Philip the Good, the Duke of Burgundy, and Memling had practised his calling in Bruges, Flemish art had languished. The Reformation and the troubles of the sixteenth century were not favourable to its development. The Flemish nobles were generally ignorant, uncultured and coarse-living, with little literary or artistic proclivities. The years of Rubens' journeying in Italy had been a period of learning. In Antwerp he reached his greatest fame. From the artistic point of view the years from 1609, until the Archduke's death, are the most important of his life. After Albert's death, Isabel employed him on many a diplomatic mission; he had, as he said, always one foot in the stirrup, and in consequence his art was often neglected. During the Archduke's life-time, most of his most famous works were undertaken. The religious subjects treated for various ecclesiastical institutions—the wonderful "Descent from the Cross," and the "Elevation" in the Cathedral at Antwerp; and the "Christ crucified between the two thieves" (*Le coup de lance*)—date from this period. During the peace also he began the series of pictures for Marie de' Medici, representing her married life with Henry IV. of France, placed by him in the Luxemburg in Paris, and afterwards removed to the Louvre.

Around Rubens at Antwerp gathered the painters whose names are among the most famous in the annals of Flemish art. To all the friendship of this most genial and kindly of men was extended. On all, on his pupils, his contemporaries, and even on his former master Venius,

he seems to have exercised a profound influence. If Van Dyck was not actually his pupil, he was the first of his assistants, and for many years painted in his studio in Antwerp. Later, when Rubens was occupied on his diplomatic missions, Van Dyck took his place at Isabel's court. The relations between the members of this great Antwerp school seem to have been of the happiest. Rubens painted the larger figures in several pictures of Jan Breughel, a member of a family, which gave many painters to Flanders. On the other hand, the delicate floral wreaths which frame so many of Rubens' holy groups, appear to be the work of Breughel. With Franz Snyders, whose well-known "Stag-hunt," and many other similar subjects, were painted for Philip III. of Spain, Rubens also collaborated. The "Boar-hunt," one of the finest of the joint works of the two artists, displays the vivid movement and the almost brutal fidelity to nature, which characterize the school.

Rubens was almost as much at ease in painting homely scenes, in depicting the life of the people, in pot-houses, at kermesse, at rustic weddings, as he was in dealing with holy subjects, or in painting portraits. In this sphere of his work the elder Teniers, though his contemporary, was his pupil. And through him Rubens' influence may be traced on the younger and greater Teniers, whose first lessons in painting were learnt from his father.

To all these, and to a host of minor artists—Philip de Champaigne, van Alsloot and Sallaert (in whose paintings the scenes in the life of the court, the gay fêtes at Tervueren, the Infanta's shooting are depicted) the Archduke played Maecenas. His fondness for the society of artists formed a strong bond between him and

the Infanta. Lifelong mutual esteem was strengthened by a common taste. For nearly a quarter of a century the Archdukes had been husband and wife, and Albert had taken the place in Isabel's life which her father had held before her marriage. To Isabel's great sorrow no child had been born to them, but nevertheless, theirs had been a union of complete harmony. Isabel troubled herself little with the administration of public affairs during her husband's lifetime, knowing that he would rule her people according to the same ideals which animated herself. In their happy and peaceful private life, their natures fitly supplemented each other. If Isabel had the more social gifts—if she was more gracious, amiable and vivacious—she could admire the solid virtues of her husband's character, his personal courage, his keen sense of honour and of justice, his kindliness, his anxiety for the well-being of their subjects, his industry in providing for their needs. Theirs had been no ordinary marriage of convenience, but a true companionship founded upon life-long intimacy, and mutual regard. Though Isabel's character was, in some respects, the stronger, she had leaned upon her husband in the difficulties which came upon them. During his long illness she nursed him with tender care, as she had nursed her father; and she saw him carried to his last resting-place with a sense of irreparable loss. It had been her lot to outlive the two whom she held dearest. Henceforth she must stand alone, her life must be a sad and lonely duty; doubly lonely, because she was a widow and a Princess.

CHAPTER XII

WIDOWHOOD, AND A RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES

The Infanta, at the Archduke's death, from being Sovereign, becomes Governess of the Netherlands—The Twelve Years' Truce expires—Difficulties in the United Provinces during the Truce—The quarrels of Gomarists and Arminians—Rivalry between Maurice of Nassau and Olden-Barneveldt—Sectarian strife reaches an acute stage—The appeal to arms—The execution of Olden-Barneveldt—Maurice of Nassau eager for war—Negotiations for peace between Brussels and the Hague come to nothing—The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War—The causes; the beginnings—The Archduke Ferdinand in Styria, in Bohemia—The "defenestration of Prague"—The death of the Emperor Matthias—Ferdinand becomes Emperor—Frederick, the Elector Palatine, chosen King of Bohemia—He is expelled, and the ban is issued against him—The Archduke Albert to enforce the ban in the Lower Palatinate—The Netherlands denuded of troops, who are sent to take part in the war in the Empire

ISABEL'S first desire, on the death of her husband, was to retire altogether from public affairs, to a life of seclusion and devotion. The element of mysticism, hereditary in her family, which had led Charles V. to the monastery at Yuste, and Philip II. to the cell at the Escorial, was not absent in her character. On the day following her husband's death, she adopted the grey habit of the nuns of the Order of St Clara or Poor Clares, which she never quitted until her death. During the following year (on October 22nd, 1622) she dedicated herself to the rule of St Francis, of which the Poor Clares formed one

order; and her example was followed by many of the ladies of the court.

It was, indeed, doubtful what position would be offered to the Infanta by the King of Spain. That her sovereign rights over the Netherlands were at an end was certain. As Isabel was childless, the cession of Philip II. ceased at the death of the Archduke Albert. In 1616 Philip III. had been inaugurated as eventual heir to the Netherlands.¹ Shortly after her husband's death, Isabel wrote to her nephew, Philip IV., who, in the spring of 1621, had succeeded his father Philip III. on the throne of Spain, urging her desire to lay down all office; and advising him to empower the Marquis of Bedmar, his ambassador in the Netherlands, to take the oath of fidelity from the provinces. On the other hand, the Marquis Ambrose Spinola possessed a secret document dated at Aranjuez, April 16th, 1606,² appointing him, from the moment of the Archduke's death, Governor of the Netherlands in the King's name, with power to rule, in peace and war, as the King of Spain's governors and captains-general had been wont to do.³

Neither of these plans, however, prevailed. The usefulness of maintaining a ruler of such great personal popularity as the Infanta was obvious. Isabel was

¹ Henne and Wauters, vol. ii.

² According to the Marquis Spinola's secret instructions, had Isabel died first, Albert would have remained Governor for the King of Spain. Nevertheless, all the practical power was to fall to Spinola, who was empowered to take an oath of homage to the King of Spain, from the Archduke and from the Estates. The Marquis was further to hold a large force in readiness to enforce his Majesty's wishes; even to the point of seizing the Archduke's person, should he prove recalcitrant (Villa, "Spinola," pp. 126-7).

³ Villa, pp. 125-7.

persuaded to accept the Governorship, but only on the condition that she might resign it at her will.¹ The seals of the Archduke were broken, and replaced by those of the King of Spain—the symbol of the change in the Infanta's state. During the succeeding two years Isabel, by virtue of a special procuration of the King of Spain, received the oath of allegiance from the separate provinces; and swore, in the King's name, to observe their rights. The change was accomplished. As it was said, "*Ex summa principissa Belgii gubernatrix evasit.*"²

The change in Isabel's position intensified the predominance of Spanish counsels at Brussels. Albert's advisers had been Spanish by predilection. Isabel, with a greater understanding of the feelings of the Netherlanders, would probably, had she been her own mistress, have chosen native counsellors. But the Netherlands had become once more a province of Spain. The King of Spain needed no longer to persuade the sovereign of the Netherlands to a course of action. He could command his deputy. Isabel's influence was counterbalanced by that of the Spanish ambassador, the Marquis of Bedmar, a model servant for an autocratic power. A Spanish foreign policy was, from the first, imposed upon the Infanta.

Isabel had good cause to hesitate before accepting the burden of responsibility which must fall to the ruler of the Netherlands. The Twelve Years' Truce with the United Provinces had expired, and the efforts of the Archdukes had failed to bring about its renewal. They were hampered on the one hand by the ex-

¹ Record Office, Trumbull, July 26.

² Waddington, quoting Van den Sande.

orbitant demands of the Spanish ministers, and on the side of the United Provinces by the determined opposition of Maurice of Nassau to a continuation of the peace. Maurice no doubt looked to a renewal of war to restore his prestige. For since the conclusion of the Truce he had been engaged in work which he can hardly have found congenial. He was a soldier, and no politician. He had been led during the Truce into the mazes of political and theological controversy, and had burdened his conscience with a deed which in cruelty and injustice rivalled the most oppressive actions of Spain.

The Spanish counsellors had hoped that the Truce would bring division in the United Provinces, and therein they were not disappointed. There were not wanting many elements which made for disruption. The Dutch were as yet no nation, but merely a conglomeration of states and town corporations held together by the loosest of political ties. Their strongest bond of union was their devotion to the House of Orange. Maurice of Nassau might, before the conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce, have become sovereign of the United Provinces with the universal assent of the people.¹ He did not covet the title, being content with the reality of power. While the war lasted, he was practically a monarch. As such he had raised the prestige of the Provinces. At the head of a mercenary army better trained and better paid than his enemies' troops, he had inflicted defeat in the open field upon the Spanish forces.² But his victories could not have raised the Dutch to the lofty position as an independent power which they attained. As a people,

¹ Motley.

² See note at the end of the chapter.

they showed much patience and great powers of passive resistance, but very little military prowess. The most splendid exploits of the Dutch in their struggle for independence was their stubborn defence of the besieged towns of Alkmaar and Leyden. In the field the Spaniards, until the end of the sixteenth century, were generally victorious. Even Maurice's highly proficient mercenary army was, in two successive campaigns before the Truce, unable to cope with the troops of Spinola. It was on the sea, their natural element, that the Dutch triumphed from the opening years of their struggle. The victories of Heemskerk and his fellow-captains, the wide-sweeping depredations of the sailors, more than the campaigns of Maurice, made Spain ready for peace. The fear of Dutch rivalry at sea caused the struggle with regard to the India trade, the real crux of the Truce negotiations.

During the Twelve Years' Truce, the triumphs of the United Provinces were won in the fields of commerce and diplomacy. Maurice now occupied a position of importance secondary to that of John van Olden-Barneveldt, the Advocate. Barneveldt it was who negotiated the treaties which raised the United Provinces to a position in Europe quite out of proportion to their political significance. His diplomacy removed most of the causes of irritation between the English and the Dutch, arising out of conflicts for commercial supremacy. He took advantage of James I.'s financial needs to buy back, for an amount far less than the debt claimed by the English, the cautionary towns held by English garrisons in Zeeland. He made an alliance with the Hanse towns, in order to tighten the grip of the Dutch on the Baltic. With a view to

freeing Dutch trade in the Mediterranean, a commercial treaty was made with Morocco, and missions were sent to Venice and Constantinople. In 1610 Thomas Contarini, the first ambassador from the Venetian Republic, arrived at the Hague.

The rivalry between Maurice and Barneveldt was deep-seated. Each regarded the aims of the other with suspicion. Maurice, however, realized that he was no politician, and was content to leave the administration of political affairs to the Advocate, who in experience was unrivalled by any of his countrymen. Barneveldt was the head and brain of the oligarchical municipal party which had brought about the truce with Spain in opposition to the wishes of Maurice of Nassau. His heart was in the commercial development of the Provinces by diplomacy. The Dutch were a patient, plodding people, who cared more for material prosperity than for politics; and thus, in spite of difficulties, for a time their tranquillity was undisturbed. The peace which this state of affairs rendered possible was broken by a religious crisis which had long been threatening. The Provinces were plunged into the vortex of sectarian strife, and Maurice of Nassau and Olden-Barneveldt, neither of them theologians, stood forth as the champions of the two opposing factions.

What proportion of the population of the Northern Provinces had adopted Protestantism, it is not easy to estimate. The numbers of those who adhered to the old faith vary, in different estimates, from one-third to two-thirds of the inhabitants.¹ There were, at any

¹ Motley, "Life of Barneveldt," says, "at least one-third." Edmundson, "C. M. H.," III., says, "possibly two-thirds of the entire population" were Roman Catholics.

rate, in the United Provinces large numbers of Roman Catholics who submitted to exclusion from all political rights, and from the exercise of public worship. Except in a few towns, where the magistrates were more tolerant than was customary, they were subjected to a mass of petty vexations.¹ Sometimes indulgence from annoyance was bought by the payment of a fine. The Protestants of the United Provinces had always been Calvinists, but of two kinds. The orthodox Calvinists, the true successors of a repressive Roman Church, would have persecuted, and excluded from all civil rights, those who refused to subscribe to the theological dogmas and tenets laid down in the Netherlands Confession. With a view to enforcing their ideas they called for a National Church Synod, which should clear up all questions under dispute, and create a Reformed State Church which should have supreme control throughout the Provinces. The more tolerant Calvinists, the "Libertines" as they were called, insisted on the maintenance of the clause of the Treaty of Utrecht, the document constituting the United Provinces, which left each province free to determine its own form of worship. The chief subject of contention between the rival parties was the question of Predestination, upon which the orthodox party held the most rigid and uncompromising views. The strife, which had raged since the death of William of Orange, reached a crisis in the controversies of two professors of theology at the University of Leyden, Gomarus and Arminius, from whom henceforth the two parties took their names; the Gomarists or Orthodox and the Arminians or "Libertines."

¹ Hagemans, Contarini's account, 1610.

All Barneveldt's sympathies were enlisted on the side of the more tolerant party. Principally he dreaded the control over secular affairs which the Gomarists would have given to the Church. Like William the Silent, he was determined to uphold the civil authority, but would have allowed such toleration in matters of faith as did not tend to subvert the power of the State. But throughout the Provinces, the majority of preachers and of the Calvinist population were, as might be expected, against him, in their support of the more intolerant doctrines. And the Gomarists drew to their side still greater numbers by bringing accusations of heresy and of complicity with the Papists against the Arminians. Barneveldt for some time successfully opposed the Gomarist demand for a National Synod. In 1614, the Estates of Holland, in which he was supreme, passed a resolution forbidding the preachers to speak in the pulpits on the questions which gave rise to controversy. He hoped in this way to allay the storm of conflict.

The result of his action was the reverse of what he had anticipated. A strong minority, in Amsterdam and other towns, defied the order of the Estates of Holland; and Barneveldt found that only by the use of force could he make the will of the Provincial Estates prevail. He was, however, faced by the difficulty that the military force which he required could only be employed with the consent of Maurice of Nassau, the Captain-General of the forces of the Union. Maurice, after some hesitation, had declared for the party opposed to Barneveldt; and now openly proclaimed himself in favour of the Gomarists and upheld the resistance of the sect in Amsterdam to the Estates of Holland. Barne-

veldt thereupon decided to exercise the rights of Holland as the sovereign Province of the Union, and to call out a force of men owing allegiance only to the Provincial Estates. The reply of Maurice and his cousin Lewis William, the Stadtholder of Friesland, was to pass through the Estates-General, in which they commanded the votes of four out of the seven provinces, a resolution for the summons of the National Synod so long demanded by the Gomarists. To this the Estates of Holland refused assent; and Barneveldt began to take an oath of allegiance to the Provincial Estates from all the magistrates of the province. Levies were made in Holland and in Utrecht, which alone stood firmly on the side of Holland. But Barneveldt's party was hopelessly in the minority. Maurice swooped down upon Utrecht with an armed force, and demanded the disbanding of the levies. The spirit of the men of Utrecht gave way and they obeyed. The Corporation was remodelled. Gomarists took the place of Arminians, and Maurice's will became law. Holland was isolated. Her spirit was broken. Within a short time Barneveldt was arrested, on a secret resolution of the Estates-General at the Hague, and with his supporters thrown into prison. Maurice then passed through Holland with a strong retinue, effecting changes in the magistrates, until the Gomarist party everywhere predominated. The seven provinces then unanimously approved the summons of the National Church Synod.

In the trial of Barneveldt and his fellow-prisoners no element of cruelty and injustice was omitted. For months they were kept in prison, without any communication with each other. Ledenburg, the Secretary of the Estates of Utrecht, under menace of torture, com-

mitted suicide. After months of imprisonment, Barneveldt was summoned before a commission, composed of his implacable enemies which, after examining him with great severity more than sixty times, handed him over to a court of twenty-four judges. This court was illegal in constitution, as it did not contain the requisite number of Hollanders, and was besides composed of Barneveldt's personal foes. He protested that he had a right to be tried by the Sovereign Court of Holland, but it availed him nothing. He was allowed no advocate, nor the use of books, pen or paper. He had been examined on matters covering a period of over forty years ; yet he was not allowed to consult his papers, which Maurice had seized. During the trial the only really capital charge, that of entertaining correspondence with Spain, was abandoned. Yet Maurice was implacable. On May 12th, 1619, sentence of death was passed. The following morning the old man of over seventy, who had served his country for more than forty years, was led to execution. At the same time sentence was executed on Ledenburg's dead body, and others were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Meanwhile the Synod of the orthodox Calvinists, who had compassed the death of Barneveldt, had met at Dort. It was, in fact, a local and Calvinistic counterpart of the Council of Trent. The Netherlands Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, the sternest expression of Calvinistic faith, were approved without change. Amid rejoicings, the Arminians were pronounced heretics and teachers of false doctrines. They were declared unfit to hold any post in Churches, universities or schools.¹ A general proscription fol-

¹ Edmundson in "C. M. H.," III. ch. xix.

lowed. Hundreds of Arminian preachers were dismissed and exiled, and rewards were offered for their capture. Like the Catholics, the Arminians were forbidden to hold meetings for public worship. When they disobeyed, the meetings were broken up amid bloodshed and massacre. During this period of religious distress, many of the sufferers fled to Antwerp, in the Archdukes' dominions, which became the asylum of the persecuted refugees.

Not even the malice of his inveterate enemies could find in Barneveldt's papers, a particle of evidence to prove him faithless to his country. His long drawn-out trial was a cruel mockery, his execution a judicial murder. It is true that he had upheld the province of Holland against the United Provinces, an action calculated to endanger the integrity of the Northern Netherlands. But it was not for this that Barneveldt perished. He met his end in strife with the forces of bigotry and intolerance; in opposing the efforts of a repressive Calvinist sect to establish a religious tyranny in the State, no less harsh than that which Spain had striven to maintain. He was one of the founders of the Independent United Provinces. He had toiled longer than any other in their service. He was done to death by his fellow-countrymen in the state whose very existence was a protest against alien and religious oppression. Seventeenth century Puritanism was indeed closely akin in its workings to seventeenth century Jesuitism.

Though popular feeling among the Calvinists of the Northern Provinces was with Maurice in his treatment of the Arminian leaders, yet, when the passion of sectarian hatred had somewhat cooled, a feeling of dis-

content and unrest supervened. Maurice hoped to restore unity and content by a successful campaign in the field. His desire was shared by some of his countrymen. The Chancellor of Brabant, sent by Isabel to ask an audience of the Estates-General at the Hague, was received with insult and contumely. Yet for several months a private agent of the Infanta, a certain Madame T'serclaes, a Dutch lady, the widow of an ardent supporter of William the Silent, whose daughters resided in the Spanish Netherlands, went to and fro between Brussels and the United Provinces under the impression that Maurice was very ready for peace. It was not until the autumn of 1621, that Isabel realized that war with the Dutch was inevitable.¹ She had little hope of success, or even of being able to defend herself against attack. For the Netherlands were largely denuded of troops. The bulk of the Spanish forces in the provinces had been drafted into Germany to fight for the cause of Catholicism and Imperialism in the Thirty Years' War.

This war, so long threatened, had broken out during the last years of the Archduke Albert's life. Beginning in a purely Bohemian quarrel, in which religious, constitutional, and dynastic elements were blended, it ended by being a war of the North against the South, of the forces of separatism against imperialism as represented by the house of Habsburg, of Protestantism against Catholicism.² Racial antipathies, political antagonism, religious differences were ranged against each other in this long drawn-out contest. The Peace of Augsburg of

¹ Correspondence, Brussels Archives, "Secrétairerie d'Etat et de Guerre."
"Correspondence d'Isabelle avec Philippe IV.," vol. xi. 1621, July-December.

² Stubbs' "Lectures on European History."

1555 was an expression of the principle that difference in religion was no proper cause for war ; and in spite of its defects, it did for long stave off its actual recurrence. As time went on, however, both parties disregarded its terms ; and after the death of Maximilian II., if not before, the Imperial authority was too feeble to enforce them. It is not too much to say that, for the princes of Germany, with few exceptions, Protestantism was merely a cloak, under cover of which they might indulge their greed of territory. The Peace of Augsburg had been a triumph for the territorial princes. The principle of "*cujus regio, ejus religio*," added vastly to their powers, which had long been a great menace to the central authority. They were not ready to forego the aggrandizement, which came to them from the secularization of church property.

The Catholics, on their side, lost no opportunity of restoring the Roman faith to the power from which it had fallen in the time of the Reformation. Their work was furthered by the Jesuits, the most faithful strenuous and capable servants that any cause ever had. First introduced into Bavaria, they gradually spread the cloak of a reformed Catholicism over the whole of Southern Germany by capturing schools, universities and councils. Catholicism received aid not only from the Jesuits, but from the divisions among the Protestants. The Calvinists had not been included in the Peace of Augsburg, for no German state at that period could be called Calvinist. From the time, however, of the introduction of Calvinism into the Palatinate by the Elector Frederick III., the ill-feeling between Lutherans and Calvinists had become acute ; and the quarrels of the two sects, and also of Lutheran against

Lutheran, caused the disasters of the Protestants in the early stages of the Thirty Years' War.

During Rudolf's long reign the tide of Catholic reaction set in strongly in the Empire; while there were also formed the two organizations which were to stand opposed to each other in the Thirty Years' War—the Catholic League and the Protestant or Evangelical Union. Both events were due to one man, the Archduke Ferdinand, one of the heroes of the war on the Catholic side. In 1597 he succeeded to the Habsburg lands in Styria, Carniola, and Carinthia and immediately started a policy of proscription and banishment of the Protestants throughout his territories. His zeal so terrified the Protestant Princes, that they bound themselves together for mutual defence, while they sought an alliance with the King of France. The Catholics replied to this challenge by forming a league under Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria. Thus, many years before the outbreak of hostilities, the two opposing parties stood face to face.

Ferdinand of Styria's work was but just begun. Soon his sphere of action was widened. Rudolf, the Emperor, practising a policy of mild repression in Bohemia and his hereditary Archduchy of Austria, came into conflict with his subjects, of whom a large majority had embraced Protestantism; and his brother Matthias, intriguing against him, forced him to make over these lands. As a result, Matthias had very naturally been obliged to buy the allegiance of his new subjects by concessions to the religion which the majority professed. He soon succeeded his brother as Emperor, a position in which many great difficulties confronted him. He was an old man, and desired peace. He and his brothers, of whom Albert was one,

were childless ; and their hopes were set upon their cousin, the Archduke Ferdinand of Styria. Ferdinand's Catholic zeal was well known. It was not likely that he would abate it, whatever his surroundings ; nor was it to be thought that the Bohemians would yield a jot of the concessions wrung from Matthias. In spite of this, the Emperor, contrary to the advice of his minister Klesl, obtained for Ferdinand the succession to Bohemia in 1617. In the following year he secured for him also the Crown of Hungary, which, like the Crown of Bohemia, was elective.

As might have been expected, it was not long before Ferdinand and his subjects were at strife. The Archduke began to attack the Bohemian Protestants. They determined at all costs to be rid of him ; and found a leader in a Bohemian noble, the Count of Thurn. An occasion for displaying their hostility soon offered. Ferdinand ordered the demolition of two Evangelical churches. It appears that he was legally justified ;¹ but Thurn declared that his action was a breach of the royal edict whereby Matthias had granted to the Bohemian Protestants certain rights with regard to the erection of places of worship. He summoned delegates of the Protestant population to Prague, where they demanded the expulsion of the Catholic Regents. They gained admission to the Council Chamber, and flung from the windows the Regents Slawata and Martinitz, and their secretary, Fabricius (May 23rd, 1618). A provisional Protestant government was appointed ; and the Jesuits were banished. Shortly afterwards, Ferdinand's election was annulled.

The troubles of Ferdinand with his subjects, and

¹ Stubbs.

the "Defenestration of Prague," as it was called, finally plunged the Empire into the Thirty Years' War. Armies already began to move. Count Ernest of Mansfeld appeared in the service of the Bohemians. Bucquoy brought troops from the Netherlands, sent by the King of Spain to aid his German kinsman. The Protestant Union was renewed for three years. The throne of Bohemia was offered to Frederick the Elector Palatine. Thurn had revolutionized the country, and was ravaging Austria—the heart of the Emperor's possessions. It was, moreover, evident that Matthias' end was drawing near. He was anxious to close his days in peace. He was very reluctant to come to blows with the Bohemians; and had proposed that the matter should be settled by arbitration, when, in March 1619, he died in a fit.

Ferdinand was a man of different calibre from his cousin. But his fortunes were at a very low ebb. During the months which preceded the imperial election, he was besieged in his own capital of Vienna by his rebellious subjects. It was vital to him to become Emperor. His cousins, with that strong feeling of unity which, with few exceptions, reigned in the House, made over to him the Habsburg estates which they had inherited, and refused to allow themselves to be nominated for the post of Emperor. Had his opponents shown equal unity in action they might have thwarted Ferdinand's aims. They offered the Imperial Crown first to Maximilian of Bavaria, as staunch a Catholic as Ferdinand; and then to the Duke of Savoy. Failing in both efforts, they might still have found another candidate. The three ecclesi-

astical electors supported Ferdinand.¹ Could the election be postponed until the Evangelical Union had placed Frederick of the Palatinate on the throne of Bohemia, a vote would be gained against Ferdinand. The other electors were the Elector of Saxony, a Lutheran; the Margrave of Brandenburg and the Elector Palatine, both Calvinists. Saxony preferred a Catholic to a Calvinist, and supported Ferdinand. Finally, also, Brandenburg deserted the Palatine, and on August 28th, 1619, at Frankfort, Ferdinand was elected Emperor.

The day before, Frederick, the Elector Palatine, had been elected King of Bohemia at Prague. He did not long enjoy his honours. Ferdinand swooped down on Bohemia with well-laid plans. Frederick showed neither courage nor resource. After the battle of the White Mountain his position at Prague was no worse than Ferdinand's had been the year before in Vienna. Yet he yielded without the slightest resistance, and fled with his wife, James I.'s beautiful and ambitious daughter Elizabeth, the "Queen of Hearts."

The revolt in Bohemia was quelled and the Emperor's authority restored, without directly involving any foreign power. The government of France was, at the time, beginning a religious war against the Huguenots, under Rohan and Soubise, and as yet stood aloof. James I. was torn between his desire to please his subjects, who were keen partisans of the Elector Palatine, and his fear of offending Spain, with whom he sought an alliance. He would have welcomed Bohemia as an inheritance for his daughter's children had he

¹ The seven Electors were the Archbishops of Cologne, Mayence and Treves, the King of Bohemia, the Elector of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg and the Count Palatine.

not keenly felt the impropriety of encouraging the Bohemians in their rebellion against their lawful sovereign. Finally he consented to send a few thousand men to the Continent; while he also sanctioned the raising of volunteers to aid the Palatine. Philip III., against the advice of his prime minister, was prevailed upon to dispatch 24,000 men from the Netherlands, under Ambrose Spinola, to the assistance of the Emperor.¹

Ferdinand, having driven the wretched "winter king" from Bohemia, prepared to hound him from the Empire. In January 1621, the ban was proclaimed against him and his followers. The execution thereof was imposed upon Maximilian of Bavaria, in the Upper Palatinate, and upon the Archduke Albert in the Lower Palatinate, Frederick's territory lying along the Rhine and marching with the lands of the Archbishop of Treves and the Duke of Lorraine. Spinola entered the Lower Palatinate and speedily occupied the whole territory, with the exception of the three towns of Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Frankenthal. After these successes, he concluded a short armistice with the Protestant Union. While it still lasted, he was recalled to the Netherlands, but his troops remained in Germany, under Gonsalvo de Cordova. On the eastern frontier of Germany lay more troops from the Netherlands, several thousands under Bucquoy, serving with the troops of the Catholic League commanded by John T'serclaes, Count Tilly, himself a Netherlander by birth and a native of Brussels. It was in these circumstances, crippled by the absence of her best troops, that Isabel was called upon, in the first months of her administration, once more to open the war against the Dutch.

¹ Stubbs.

Note to page 188.—With reference to the soldiers whom the Dutch Republic opposed to Spain, the testimony of Thomas Contarini, the Venetian ambassador at the Hague, is of value. Contarini, who was in the United Provinces in 1610 when peace reigned between the Dutch and their enemies, tells us that they had then in their service 6000 French troops, of whom 4000 were maintained at the expense of the French Government, about 3000 English, 2000 Scotch, and 3000 Germans. He also quotes the saying of Cardinal Bentivoglio, the papal nuncio in Brussels, to the effect that the strongest and most powerful sinew of the Dutch army was the number and quality of their foreign soldiers. (Hagemans, "Relations inédites," etc.)

Motley finds it a "terrible reflection" that the Spaniards, Walloons, and Italians, who fought before Ostend, "confronted death so eagerly, not from motives of honour, religion, discipline, not inspired by any kind of faith or fanaticism, but because the men who were employed in this terrible sausage-making and dyke-making were promised five stivers a day instead of two." ("United Netherlands," iv. 39, p. 67.) It would be interesting to know what motives inspired the English, who, in many engagements formed a very large part of the Dutch army, and were often the sweepings of the London prisons; or, indeed, the French soldiers serving with the United Provinces, among whom were probably many Catholics. The Spaniards, Walloons, and Italians were at any rate practically all of one religion, at a time when religious belief counted for much. They were, moreover, all subjects of one sovereign, the King of Spain.

CHAPTER XIII

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR AND THE WAR IN THE NETHERLANDS

Philip IV. succeeds Philip III. in Spain—The war in the Empire—Isabel sends troops to the Rhine, the Lower Palatinate to co-operate with the Duke of Bavaria and the forces of the Catholic League—Spinola in the Netherlands—The campaign in Jülich and Cleves, 1621-2—Scarcity of troops—The campaign in the west of Brabant—The siege of Bergen-op-Zoom—Tilly's successes in the Palatinate over Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick, the Bishop of Halberstadt—The Elector Palatine dismisses them—They enter the Spanish Netherlands—The battle of Fleurus—Spinola forced to raise the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom—The truce in the Empire, negotiated by Isabel—War dribbles on—The powers form the Treaty of Paris (1624) against the house of Habsburg—Mansfeld in France and in London—Mansfeld's expedition—Spinola besieges Breda—Death of Maurice of Nassau—Surrender of Breda, June 5th, 1625—The Infanta in Breda—Her progress through Flanders—At Antwerp—Rubens

IT was with no great confidence of success that Isabel saw Spinola depart on his campaign against the Dutch. But the commander now took his orders from Spain, whence came explicit injunctions to open the war. Philip IV. had, in the spring of 1621, succeeded Philip III.; but the change, as far as Isabel was concerned, was not great. Isabel, immediately after her husband's death, had effected drastic economies in the household, and sought in every way to cut down her personal expenditure.¹ Supplies

¹ Trumbull, September 3rd, 1621. Record Office, "S.P. Foreign, Flanders," vol. xiv.

from Spain were not forthcoming with greater regularity than in her brother's day. Olivares, who ruled in Philip IV.'s name, was forceful and industrious, while Lerma, Philip III.'s favourite, had been indolent. But Olivares was unequal to the task of restoring, in any degree, the ruined finances of Spain. He could not produce the money for the designs which Spain still harboured.

The Archduke Albert had deemed it the wiser course for the Netherlands to cease all hostilities in Germany. Isabel herself urged the necessity of the continuation of the armistice in the Palatinate, if war was to be waged against the Dutch with any hope of success.¹ Yet she considered herself bound, by her promise to the Duke of Bavaria, to send a force of veterans to act in conjunction with his troops. Bavaria demanded that Cordova, in the Lower Palatinate, should take the field at the same time as himself, at the beginning of August. Moreover, Isabel was herself keenly interested in keeping the notorious Protestant soldier and ravager, Ernest of Mansfeld, from the Netherlands. After Spinola's departure from the Rhenish Palatinate, Mansfeld by forced marches had come from Bohemia, followed by Tilly. He was joined by a force of English under Sir Francis Vere, and together they expelled Cordova and his Spanish troops.² To oppose him in his triumphant career the veteran troops of the Netherlands were left in Germany, while Spinola took the field against the Dutch with an army consisting largely of recruits.

¹ Brussels Archives, "Correspondence," July and August 16th, 1621.

² "Secrétairerie d'Etat et de Guerre," Brussels Archives, vol. xi. Infanta to King, August 26th, 1621.

Spinola's efforts were directed against the duchies of Jülich and Cleves, those territories lying along the Rhine upon which the eyes of Europe had been directed some years before. His objective was especially the city of Jülich, which had been in the hands of the Dutch since the Marquis of Brandenburg had yielded it to Maurice of Nassau, in 1610. The importance of the place both to the United Provinces and to the Netherlands was apparent. Jülich was the gate-way, through which an army might be hurled on North Germany, or a German attack made on either the Dutch or the Spanish Netherlands. Its possession would open up to Spinola an entry into the Duchy of Gueldres, through Cleves, and perhaps even into Holland, the heart of the United Provinces.

Jülich had been strongly fortified by Maurice, and contained a large force of men. By making feints on various places in the territory, Spinola lured Orange to weaken the garrison. He then sent the Flemish general, Count Henry van den Berg, to blockade the city, and followed with the bulk of his army. Throughout the winter the besiegers suffered terribly from the cold, but Jülich remained untaken. Finally in February, reduced to despair, the town surrendered. It was obvious, however, in spite of his success, that Spinola could not conduct a war with the troops at his disposal. He had been forced to enlist any men who would come to his standard, Germans, Scotch and English, many of whom, according to the complaint of the Council of State in Madrid, were heretics.

Spinola, like many another commander, found that creed has little to do with courage. In reply to the charge of the Spanish ministers, he expressed himself

forcibly to the effect that the heretic, though "a poor benighted heathen," was a "first-class fighting man." And that, after all, was what he needed.

Isabel strove to supply the deficiency by sending messengers to intreat her nephew for Spanish and Italian troops. She also urged that, as peace had been made in Hungary, the Walloon, Italian and German troops maintained there by the King of Spain might be drafted to the Rhenish Palatinate, in order to set free the troops so badly needed by Spinola. Isabel's position with regard to the Palatinate was particularly galling. She was given powers to conclude a fresh armistice, and willingly consented to do so. But the truce seemed likely, as the English ambassador in Brussels said, to "resemble the Green Goose Fayre at Stratford Bowe; where men pay more for the sauce, than the meat is worth."¹ Tilly, the general of the League, refused to obey the Infanta, urging that he owed allegiance only to the Emperor and Bavaria, who desired no cessation of hostilities; while Cordova declared himself bound by the King of Spain's command to render obedience in all matters to Tilly, his superior officer.²

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, a change was taking place in the conduct of the war. Since the fall of Ostend the chief engagements between the combatants had taken place on the eastern frontier towards Germany. During the earlier months of 1622 the Spanish occupation of the territory of Jülich, and its subsidiary lands of Berg and Mark, was completed. Then Spinola turned his attention to the north-west

¹ Record Office, "S.P. Flanders," Trumbull, March $\frac{20}{30}$, 1621/2.

² Record Office, Sir Richard Weston, July 6th, 1622.

of Brabant, and there, for several years, the sternest conflicts took place. Several of the towns in the north of Brabant had, at the time of the separation of the Netherlands, gone with the North, and had never been conquered by Parma or his successors. Such a place was Bergen-op-Zoom. Situated very near the coast, where the north-western extremity of Brabant jutted out between the islands which form the county of Zeeland and those to the south of Holland, Bergen-op-Zoom in Spanish hands would form an excellent base for effecting an entry into the United Provinces both by sea and by land. Spinola determined to get a grip upon the place; and for some time had been negotiating secretly with the governor of the garrison, who promised to open a gate to him.¹ In July 1622 he moved up his troops; and, relying upon his ally within, did not hasten his entrenchments. But in one of the first engagements, the Governor of Bergen-op-Zoom was killed; and the siege was then begun in earnest. During the course of the siege came news of the triumphs of Tilly in the Rhenish Palatinate, and in a short time the back-wash from the war in Germany swept over the Netherlands.

Tilly had been faced in the Palatinate by the Palatine's three generals, Mansfeld, Christian of Brunswick (the Bishop of Halberstadt), and the Margrave of Baden-Durlach. Learning wisdom from one defeat, he determined to triumph over the superior forces of his enemies by dividing them. He met Baden at Wimpfen on the Neckar and defeated him. At Höchst on the Main, he fell upon Brunswick, routed him, forced him to retreat towards Mansfeld's lines, and drove the two from the

¹ Villa, "Spinola," p. 403.

Palatinate into Alsace. Still these two adventurers were not discouraged, but lived cheerfully upon the inhabitants, committing "all the Cossackian cruelties and barbarous acts,"¹ and striving to put down mutiny by allowing their troops liberty to ravage. A blow fell upon them when Frederick the Palatine, persuaded that his father-in-law, James I., could, through his influence with Spain, restore him to his territory, consented to dismiss his generals.

Mansfeld and Brunswick thereupon determined to join Maurice of Nassau in the Netherlands. They made their way through Lorraine and there separated, Mansfeld passing through France and Hainault, Brunswick through Luxemburg to Brabant. Great was the terror and distress of the French, who soon learnt that the reputation of the plunderer and ravager was no worse than he merited.² But on his passage through Hainault, for some unknown reason, Mansfeld refrained from pillaging. And though his demand for provisions from Binche was met by armed resistance, his forces passed by the Infanta's seat at Marimont, without doing any damage. At Fleurus, on the borders of Namur and Brabant, Mansfeld fell in with the Spanish General Gonsalvo de Cordova (on August 29th). A savage encounter followed, in which several thousand men were slain, and many standards, including those of Mansfeld and Brunswick, were captured. Cordova claimed the victory; but Mansfeld, with his cavalry, cut his way through to Maurice's army, losing, however, the greater part of his infantry, his artillery and baggage. He won his way through to the frontier of Holland, but the price which he paid was enormous.

¹ Record Office, "S. P., Flanders," vol. xv., Trumbull, Aug. $\frac{2}{12}$ th, 1622.

² Villermont, "Mansfeld," ii. p. 99.

It was his custom to feed his armies on the territory through which he was passing. But this was impossible in the exhausted province of Brabant. His path was strewn with corpses. Hundreds of his men deserted, and begged to be taken into the service of Spain. Yet he achieved his purpose ; and Maurice was able, through the aid of Mansfeld and Brunswick, to raise the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom.

The Infanta displayed great distress at the news of the battle of Fleurus. Learning that many wounded had been left on the field, or were ill-accommodated in the surrounding villages, she sent out the Audiencier, one of her chief ministers, and had the wounded of both parties brought into Brussels. They were provided with food, clothing and money. Fired by Isabel's example, the ladies of the court vied with one another in attention to those in the hospitals, and in providing lint for bandages.¹ The wife of one of the greatest Flemish nobles, the Countess of Berlaymont, took the sufferers into her own house, devoting herself to their care until their recovery. Some weeks afterwards the flags and standards taken at Fleurus were presented to Isabel, and at her order hung in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the Cathedral of Sainte Gudule, where lay the remains of the Archduke Albert.²

Isabel had in the meanwhile paid a hasty visit to the camp before Bergen-op-Zoom, where Spinola's army still lay. She reviewed the troops, conversed with the officers, thanked the men for their services, and gave to all her soldiers a word of encouragement. But she could not give Spinola the forces which he required. She had only 1500 Spanish infantry in the Netherlands, and the Italians were

¹ Villermont, ii. 103-4.

² Henne and Wauters, ii. 40.

inclined to mutiny. The day after the battle of Fleurus, she had despatched Cordova to join Spinola before Bergen-op-Zoom. He conducted himself admirably. But the Baron of Anhalt, sent by the Emperor, and Count Henry van den Berg, who should have intercepted the united Dutch and German army, were so slow in carrying out their instructions that Frederick Henry, the Prince of Orange's ¹ young brother, was able to seize Rossendal, less than two leagues from Bergen-op-Zoom. Spinola had besieged the place for three months. He had destroyed many of its fortifications, and reduced the garrison to great straits. He now learnt of the approach of the two armies under Orange and Mansfeld. His own army was so much reduced by death, disease and desertion, that he had scarcely 7000 men, and those not veterans.² His officers with one voice demanded that he should raise the siege; and this after some hesitation he decided to do. With great skill he passed between the two armies. The garrison of Bergen-op-Zoom had been reinforced, yet Spinola escaped without suffering any damage; and took with him all his sick and injured, and his baggage and artillery intact. It was a sad ending to a great undertaking. Yet the retreat from Bergen appeared unavoidable, and Spinola's conduct of it was declared admirable. Even the Spanish ambassador, the Marquis of Bedmar, lately made Cardinal de la Cueva, who was reckoned no friend to the Genoese, admitted that the reasons for his action were sufficient.³ The Infanta was deeply grieved at the failure of the

¹ (Philip William, the "Spanish" eldest son of William the Silent, had died during the truce. Maurice of Nassau was now, therefore, Prince of Orange.)

² Villa, "Spinola," p. 403.

³ Villa, "Spinola," p. 404-5.

enterprise. Yet she could not blame the general. "I entreat your Majesty to consider," she wrote to Philip IV. on October 8th, "that the fortune of war is variable, and that the effort made by the enemy was very great. It is certain that had we persisted in this enterprise a few days longer, the whole army would have been ruined, owing to the great number of troops who deserted and fell sick. Being recruits they were slain and wounded by the enemy in masses. Finally, of the two armies, only 7000 foot have returned from the siege; so that I leave your Majesty to imagine in what danger everything would have been had they all been destroyed."¹

While Isabel thus lived in the midst of war's alarms, she spared no efforts that might bring peace. The time had passed when she could declare, as she had done in the first year after her arrival in the Netherlands, that it was not a bad life to go in the summer to war, and in the winter to weddings.² War had become a most disastrous burden. More especially was it essential to stop the drain of men and resources, inadequate to her own needs, to the Palatinate. The position of the Netherlands, and Isabel's peaceable disposition, made her peculiarly fitted to act as an intermediary. James I. flattered himself that he would, through his influence with the King of Spain, be able to prevail upon the Emperor to restore the Palatinate to his daughter and son-in-law. In June 1622, Sir Richard Weston, the English Chancellor of the Exchequer, appeared in Brussels to negotiate on behalf of the Elector Palatine. James had overrated his powers and those of the King

¹ Villermont, "Mansfeld," ii. pp. 110-111.

² Villa, "Correspondencia," Sept. 19th, 1600.

of Spain. Philip IV. was indeed eager for friendship with England; so eager that he had involved himself in the totally insincere negotiations for the Anglo-Spanish marriage, the necessary breaking of which was likely to bring him into grave difficulties. He was ready, for the sake of maintaining this friendship, to urge a suspension of hostilities in the Palatinate, if he could not go so far as to demand its complete restoration to Frederick.¹

The Emperor, anxious only for the complete annihilation of his enemy, did not heed the entreaties of Isabel, of the King of Spain, or of Lord Bristol, James I.'s agent at Heidelberg. The flight of Mansfeld and Brunswick left Tilly a free hand. Heidelberg and Mannheim soon fell, and finally Frankenthal, which contained an English garrison, was put into Isabel's hand by James I. Frederick had no longer any hold in the Rhenish Palatinate. The Imperial Diet of Ratisbon, in February 1623, deprived him of the rest of his territory, the administration of which fell to Maximilian of Bavaria, to whom the Electorate was also transferred. Tilly had restored the Jesuits in the Rhenish territory, and the work of conversion was soon begun. The Duke of Bavaria, in the Upper Palatinate, followed the same course, and Protestantism was gradually stamped out.

The Emperor had for the moment no objection to a truce. A general suspension of arms for fifteen months, arranged by Isabel's agents in London, was approved by him; and was to be laid before an Imperial Diet for ratification. It would have been well for Germany and for Europe had the contending parties allowed the armistice to become a peace. As yet only the princes

¹ Brussels Archives, "Correspondence," 1622, *passim*, and Trumbull, Record Office.

of Germany had taken a direct part in hostilities, and a settlement, if now concluded, could have been dictated by German interests alone. But the war dribbled on, and very soon became a torrent fed in turn by all the powers of Europe. The Emperor was anxious still further to humiliate his foes. He devoted the interval of peace in his dominions to persecution and repression; enforcing restitution, and proscribing his Protestant subjects. In the north, the "two malevolent planets," Mansfeld and Brunswick, once more rose over Germany, only to receive a crushing defeat at the hands of Tilly at Stadlohn in Münster.

The terror inspired by Ferdinand's forceful policy and by Tilly's victory brought new forces into the arena, and the Thirty Years' War henceforth assumed a new and vaster aspect. The Treaty of Paris (1624) bound together in an alliance the kings of England, France and Denmark, the Duke of Savoy, the United Provinces, and the Republic of Venice.¹ Their ostensible object was to recover the Palatinate for the dispossessed Elector; their real aim to resist in every direction the further aggrandisement of the Emperor. Ferdinand's attempt to turn his nominal headship of the Empire into a reality was viewed with alarm by other rulers, besides the German territorial princes. The close union maintained between the Imperial and Spanish branches of the house gave the Habsburgs a policy in almost every corner of Europe. Hence the strength of the coalition which was raised against the Emperor. In England, James I. had just awakened from his dream of a Spanish alliance. The Prince of Wales, with Buckingham, had returned from Spain strongly prejudiced

¹ Stubbs, "Lectures on European History."

against a Spanish marriage; and eagerly seconded the demands of Parliament for a vigorous support of the Palatine's claims. James finally suffered himself to be persuaded by the enthusiasm of his subjects, who declared their readiness to supply money, and to sacrifice their persons in Frederick's cause. Holland received a promise of help. Mansfeld arrived in London, and was fêted and made much of on all hands. He was appointed by Royal Patent, General of the King's army in the Palatinate; he obtained authorization to raise a force of some 16,000 men, besides receiving a large monthly subsidy.¹

But if James was only to be pushed into hostility by his Parliament and his son, it was far otherwise with France. France and Spain were natural enemies. They had at the moment an object of dispute in the pretensions of both in North Italy, and over the passes through the Valtelline, the valley through which the Spaniards strove to keep up a communication between their possession, the Milanese, and Austria. In France, in 1624, the Cardinal Richelieu had entered the Council of the young King Louis XIII., and immediately a more energetic foreign policy had been instituted. Richelieu was indeed faced by many internal difficulties, and was not yet prepared to take the lead in a European war, as he was ten years later. But he was ready to join hands with, and to second the efforts of, every one of the enemies of the house of Habsburg. He negotiated the marriage of the King's sister Henrietta Maria and Charles, Prince of Wales.² His alliance was eagerly sought. Maurice of Nassau and Mansfeld came to him before going to England for assistance. Mansfeld, in

¹ Villermont, "Mansfeld."

² "C. M. H.," vol. IV.

return for a subsidy from France, promised to put into the field an army of 32,000 men;¹ and the Dutch, after much haggling, obtained a loan—1,200,000 livres for one year, and 1,000,000 livres for the two following years—on condition of making no peace or truce without the intervention of Louis XIII. of France.

It may well be imagined that the renewal of hostilities was grievous to Isabel. Besides giving aid to her immediate enemies, Maurice and Mansfeld, the Kings of France and England were supporting the King of Denmark, who was preparing to invade North Germany; while, in the south, Richelieu had assumed the offensive against Spain in the Valtelline. In these circumstances she could scarcely hope that her own needs would receive much attention. She had, early in 1623, represented to the King, her nephew, the utter impossibility of continuing the war against Holland with the funds supplied. Finally, she had received permission to raise a mortgage on the royal demesne.² But money was owing to the merchants of Antwerp, who were beginning to refuse the King of Spain's letters of credit.³ The Estates of Brabant were growing restive, and objected to the demand for fresh subsidies.

But, in the meanwhile, Maurice had already taken the field, and must be opposed. Isabel's advisers were generally in favour of besieging some place in Brabant, with the same object that had led to the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom. The convenience of Breda for effecting an entry into Holland was obvious, and Spinola determined to undertake its reduction. The enterprise was looked upon in Spain as one of great

¹ Villermont, "Mansfeld."

² Brussels Archives, May 24th, 1624.

³ July 12th, 1624.

temerity, and likely to be very costly.¹ Philip IV. sent instructions that Spinola was in no way to jeopardize any place in his Majesty's possession in the attempt to secure Breda. The Infanta is variously represented as lamenting the rashness of the undertaking, and hesitating long before agreeing to it; and, on the other hand, as spurring on her general, who was loth to endanger the King's army, by declaring "her courage to be so greate, as she wished herself of the masculine sexe for some monethes, to performe some memorable exploit, upon the Hollanders."² It seems probable, however, that Isabel in this, as in other military affairs, deferred to the opinion of Spinola, in whom she placed absolute confidence.

Breda was a place more famed for the beauty than for the importance of its situation. The city lay in the north of Brabant, surrounded by fields and woods, in a plain known as the paradise of Brabant. Its fortifications were looked upon as a masterpiece of the engineer's art, and it seemed impossible that it could be taken by assault. On August 27th, 1624, when Spinola invested Breda, he found the city well supplied and defended. The garrison of 7000 men was commanded by Justin of Nassau, the Prince of Orange's natural brother. The Dutch were famous for their obstinate resistance when besieged. Moreover, Breda formed part of the patrimony of the House of Orange, and it was to be expected that Maurice would strain every nerve to save the place. He made no effort to attack Spinola in his lines, where he was well entrenched; only harassing him by slight skirmishes, and by re-

¹ Villa. "Spinola," ch. xxii., pp. 421 *seq.*

² Record Office, "S.P., Flanders," xvii., Trumbull, August 27th, 1624.

peated attacks on his convoys, which greatly increased the difficulty and expense of feeding the besieging army. Several times he made attempts on Antwerp in the hope of forcing Spinola to raise the siege by this diversion. But after repeated failure his spirit sank and his courage began to fail. He was already attacked by the illness which was ultimately to carry him off. He was, moreover, saddened by the internal difficulties which had beset the United Provinces since the death of Olden-Barneveldt. He soon departed for the Hague, leaving his younger brother, Frederick Henry, and his cousin, Ernest Casimir, in command of the Dutch troops. His hopes were now set upon the great force which Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick were to bring from France and England.

Soon the news that Mansfeld was approaching, struck Isabel's dominions with terror. As is usual, in such times, every rumour was caught up and exaggerated, and the Infanta in Brussels was inundated with a flood of reports, demands, and jeremiads from panic-stricken provincial governors.¹ The place of Mansfeld's landing was quite uncertain. From the governors of the frontier-towns of Artois, Hainault, and Luxemburg came accounts of his landing at Calais, Boulogne, Dunkirk or Gravelines, while he was yet many miles distant. All complained that their provinces were without resources and denuded of troops, which had been drawn off for the siege of Breda. The militia had been raised in Flanders, Artois and Burgundy; but they were half-armed and quite insufficient to meet the danger which threatened.

In these difficulties, Isabel "displayed rare energy

¹ Villermont, "Mansfeld."

and statesmanlike vigilance." She showed herself "calm in the face of all these alarms, indefatigable in her care, resourceful; she animated the commanders, reassured the inhabitants. She issued a multitude of orders, gave advice, faced the danger with courage and composure, and by the energy of her measures made up for the weakness of her resources."¹ She gave orders to the Governors, as far as possible, to mount their men-at-arms, to complete their companies, and make new levies. She wrote to Spain and to the Emperor post-haste for reinforcements. She hastily drafted all her available cavalry, who were skirmishing in Brabant, to Flanders and the frontier of Artois. She sent one of her colonels to watch Dunkirk and Gravelines, with about 2000 men, the only troops which could be spared. She authorized the Governor of Burgundy to raise six companies of men, and proposed to find the money to enable the Archduke Leopold to go to his assistance. It was at this time that she is said to have begun to pawn her jewels.²

While the panic was spreading throughout the country; while, before Breda, the generals despaired of success, and urged Spinola to raise the siege, Mansfeld bore down upon Flushing. His fleet consisted of eight war vessels and 200 transports, carrying, it was thought, 20,000 men. He had proposed a few months earlier to carry fire and sword into Brabant, and thus force Spinola's army to raise the siege of Breda. The inhabitants, remembering the horrors of his campaign in East Friesland in 1623, trembled for their possessions and their lives. But from the first his progress was unsuccessful.

¹ Villermont, ii. 249.

² Record Office, vol. xviii., Trumbull, June $\frac{2}{12}$, 1625.

It was February, and for a month the snow and ice kept the troops on board. When at length they landed they were badly received, and suffered intensely from the cold and from hunger, in spite of the efforts of the French Ambassador to feed them. Heavy rains, followed by a severe frost, completed their demoralization; and a month after he left England, Mansfeld had scarcely 6000 fighting men left. Brunswick fared no better. For weeks he waited in Calais harbour for good weather; and when finally he put out, he was overtaken by a storm, and many of his ships sunk. What remained of his forces could be of no use to the Dutch, as long as he was unable to reach their territory. For James I. was still nominally at peace with the Infanta and with Spain; and according to the custom of the period had formally forbidden both Mansfeld and Brunswick to attack the lands and subjects belonging by legitimate right to these powers. This was the end of Mansfeld's ill-fated expedition, and thus the great Anglo-French army, which had struck such terror into the Netherlands, vanished into nothingness.

On all hands the Infanta's outlook began to brighten. The ancient "*bandes d'ordonnances*," the local levies, had assembled with the utmost enthusiasm, and presented themselves to be reviewed in Brussels. Help from the Emperor arrived under the Marquis Charles Spinelli, and from the Catholic League under the Baron of Anhalt, hastened, no doubt, by the presence of the Duke of Bavaria and Sigismund, Prince of Poland, the Emperor's ally, in Spinola's camp.

But the sufferings of the army before Breda and of the people of Brabant increased. The pay of the troops was many weeks in arrear, the Infanta declared that

she had not a "*real*" with which to pay them;¹ and it was said that only the efforts of the Jesuits among the soldiers prevented a general mutiny.² The people of Brabant complained that they suffered as they had never suffered before. They had a great armed force "in their very entrails." A commission for a "*corvée*" had been given to the Count of Warfusée, one of the heads of the Council of Finances, to procure carts to carry victuals and ammunition to Breda. The number demanded was greater than ever before, and not the tiniest village escaped. So great was the outcry of the Estates of Brabant against the commission, which was declared "unjust, contrary to their Privileges and opposite to all Lawes Divine, Humain, and Positive,"³ that the Infanta thought well to revoke it. The consequences might otherwise have been serious.

But the siege was now drawing to a close. Mansfeld's diversion had proved a failure. The money supplied by England and France was gone, and the Estates-General, at the Hague, beginning to weary of him, refused to make any loan. Nothing was done to relieve Breda, for Maurice lay dying at the Hague, and his illness paralysed all action on the part of the United Provinces. On April 23rd he died, asking with his last breath whether Breda still held out.

The death of Maurice further weakened the Dutch cause. In accordance with his wishes his brother Frederick Henry was immediately chosen stadtholder, captain-general and admiral-general of the forces. He was a man of ability, but cautious, and was greatly

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xviii., Letter to King, May 1st, 1625.

² Record Office, "S.P., Flanders," vol. xviii. Trumbull, May 1st, 1625.

³ Record Office, vol. xviii., Trumbull, Feb. 17, 1625.

visited, and everywhere contributions required. Isabel was preceded in her journey by Copignies and Warfusée, two of the heads of the Council of Finances; the latter a famous extortionist, now the servant of the Government, to pose later as the champion of the people. They were to prepare the towns for the Infanta's demands, and probably to bear the brunt of the odium which always attaches to the tax-collector. On her return from Breda, Isabel broke her journey to the frontier for a purpose more congenial than that which occupied her on her progress through Flanders. At Antwerp, in company with Spinola, she visited the *Sieur* Peter Paul Rubens, now ennobled, and a gentleman of her household, and already engaged in a diplomatic mission. During the siege of Breda, Rubens went to and fro between Brussels and Spinola's camp, carrying the plans for a truce with Maurice of Nassau. It was even rumoured in Brussels that Rubens had concluded a secret treaty,¹ but for various reasons, the negotiation came to nothing. A warm friendship sprang up between the military commander and the artist, which was lasting, in spite of the poor opinion which Rubens is said to have expressed of Spinola's artistic judgment.

While Isabel and Spinola were in Antwerp they both sat to the master for their portraits. In that of Spinola, we see the keen eye and firm mouth of the commander, who would not accept defeat, who was unwearied and serene alike in success and adversity.² We can picture him as he lay with his men in the trenches before Breda, careless of his dress, indifferent to

¹ Record Office, "S.P. Flanders," vol. xvii. Trumbull, Oct. $\frac{3}{13}$ th, 1624.

² Villa, "Spinola."

the rigours of the weather, existing sometimes for two days without solid food, sleeping when and where he could—often huddled up in a cart or in a soldier's box. When the work was done he appeared before the Infanta in the shining armour and the enormous ruff customary in his day, in which Rubens painted him ; and wearing about his shoulders the order of the Golden Fleece which he had, many years before, received from the King of Spain. Rubens had painted the portraits of the Archdukes soon after his return to the Netherlands, representing Isabel as a handsome woman, still in the prime of life, but with the slightly sad expression which is noticeable in her portrait even as a child. The Infanta wears a richly decorated dress and jewels, and holds in her hand a fan. In the portrait painted after the victory at Breda, much is changed. The eyes have lost none of their keenness, the mouth is strong as ever. But the expression of melancholy is deepened, the gay attire and the costly jewels are discarded. Isabel appears in the costume of a nun of Saint Clare, her hands clasped over a Franciscan girdle—the outward symbols of her solitary widowed life.

CHAPTER XIV

PHILIP THE GREAT AND THE PRINCE OF PAINTERS

Isabel's devotion to her dynasty—The close union between Spain and the Empire—Isabel protests against Spanish plans of aggression—The rupture with England—Treaty with France, 1626—Plans for an attack upon England—Isabel to take the chief part—She protests—Philip IV.'s great pretensions—The project of a military union of the Spanish dominions—Isabel supports it—Her opposition to the English enterprise—Her attempts at peace—Gerbier and Rubens—Desire for peace in England—Richelieu conquers the French Huguenots, and comes to terms with England—The Mantuan succession question—Long negotiations between Rubens and Gerbier—Rubens in Madrid—In London—Peace between England and Spain—Advantage to the Netherlands

WHEN in 1621, the Infanta expressed her readiness to take part in the war in the Empire, probably neither she, nor any ruler in Europe, was able to foresee the proportions which this conflict was to assume. Isabel could not know that she was pledging herself to bear her share in hostilities which were to last long after her death; that she was never again to behold Europe but as a vast camp always under arms. She joined the strife of the Thirty Years' War, with an eagerness born of her strong feeling of attachment to her dynasty. It was obvious that the imperial power was threatened; and the bond between Isabel and the house of Austria was only less close than that which bound her to Spain. Before Charles V. bestowed the Netherlands on his son,

Philip II., these provinces had been part of the Empire. They still formed one of the Circles into which the imperial territories had been divided in the early years of the sixteenth century. Had not Philip IV., in his capacity as head of this Burgundian Circle, his seat at the Diet, on the bench of the Princes of the Empire, sixth on the right hand of the Emperor?¹

The geographical position of the Southern Netherlands made them indispensable both to the Emperor and to the King of Spain; and in his long struggle with his enemies of the North, the Emperor Ferdinand regarded Isabel as a valuable ally. Soon, however, Isabel found her dynastic sympathies conflicting with the interests of her people in the Netherlands. When the government of the provinces fell to her she still hoped for a renewal of the truce with the Dutch; and hence perhaps, partly, her readiness to second the King of Spain's efforts in Germany. After a few years, however, the continuation of the Dutch war, and the consequent growing exhaustion of the Spanish Netherlands, demanded the concentration of the Governess' attention on the immediate dangers of her provinces. Yet she held their fate to be wholly involved in the fate of her house; and she still deemed it her duty to lend aid wherever the Habsburg power was threatened. But more and more she protested against the increasingly extravagant demands of the King of Spain. Finally, she refused to become his instrument, in the aggressive policy which he was led to adopt towards England.

The breaking of the negotiations for the marriage of Philip IV.'s sister with the Prince of Wales, found Spain face to face with the prospect of immediate war.

See "Correspondence," Brussels Archives, vol. xiii. Nov. 8th, 1622.

This was what Philip wished most to avoid at the moment. Though the negotiations had been throughout wholly without serious intention on his side, he was determined that the rupture should not come from him. It had been his intention to put the responsibility on the Pope, who, at his prompting was to refuse a dispensation for the marriage.¹ James I.'s servility made Philip hold himself secure from any evil results of the resentment which might be felt in England. But James was now completely in the power of his son, and Buckingham, indignant at the issue of their journey, and of his zealous Protestant Houses of Parliament, who clamorously demanded a war with Spain and the Emperor, and finally pushed him into open hostilities.

The prospect at the beginning of the year 1625 seemed gloomy indeed. The Habsburgs were at war with half Europe. In Italy Richelieu was establishing the French in the Valtelline. The King of Denmark, the champion of a new confederation, swooped down upon Germany with forces which, with those of his Protestant allies, considerably outnumbered the troops of Tilly and the League. In the Netherlands, Mansfeld was still a power to be dreaded; while the Dutch, strong and confident in their new alliances with Denmark and England, harassed the Spaniards in the New World, and had but lately seized a strong foothold in Brazil (May 1st, 1624). England was preparing an attack on the coast of Spain. Disaster seemed to threaten all her territories. Yet, by the autumn of 1626, by an extraordinary combination of good fortune, and of courage in adversity, Philip and the Emperor had once more triumphed over their enemies. Breda

¹ Martin Hume, "Court of Philip IV."

had fallen, and Mansfeld's threatening army had been destroyed. The English expedition against Cadiz, under Lord Wimbledon, in November 1625, had hopelessly failed, and had returned a miserable wreck. In Germany, the Emperor found in Wallenstein a new and powerful champion of his cause, who ably seconded the efforts of Tilly. By the autumn of 1625 Wallenstein had raised, at his own expense, 50,000 men, drawing to his standard all good soldiers, irrespective of religion. On all sides their opponents fell before them. Christian of Denmark with difficulty escaped from Tilly's victorious army at Lütter, in the Circle of Lower Saxony. At the bridge of Dessau, on the middle Elbe, Wallenstein struck a great blow at the power of Count Mansfeld. The Count, once more a fugitive, deserted by his quondam allies, perished as he made his way through Dalmatia to seek fresh aid from the Republic of Venice (November 1626).

The prospects of Spain were brightening. The affairs of the Valtelline and Genoa were settled; not, indeed, to the glory of Spain, but it was much that a treaty had been concluded and Spain was at peace with France. Even on the high seas and in the New World fortune once more smiled on her. The Spanish admiral Fadrique de Toledo destroyed a Dutch fleet off Gibraltar.¹ In the New World the Dutch were expelled from Brazil, and from Puerto Rico in the West Indies.²

A wave of wild enthusiasm swept over Spain. She might claim even the victories in Germany as largely

¹ Hume, "Court of Philip iv."

² "Correspondence," Brussels Archives, vol. xviii., August 6th, 1625. Infanta to King.

her own; for were not the battles fought with the men and money so plentifully poured forth from the Spanish dominions into the Empire? The Count-Duke of Olivares, the all-powerful and indefatigable favourite, had inspired poor and exhausted Spain with an ephemeral energy. In their enthusiasm the Spaniards hailed their King "Philip the Great"; they saw their country once more the champion of the mighty designs of Catholicism, as in the great days of their beloved King Philip II. It was the tragic fate of Spain that her ministers were bound by a traditional policy, which, even in the days of her glory, had proved too heavy a task; and which, as she grew weaker, brought her to destruction. Philip IV. had abated nothing from the pretensions of his fathers. It was still for him, as for them, to dictate a religion to Europe. The greatest reward of all his toils for which Philip II. could have hoped was that his hand might lead England back to the fold. Philip III. did not abandon the idea of placing Isabel and her husband on the throne in place of the Stuarts. Since the peace with England in 1604 the plans against her had slept. But the Kings of Spain had never lost touch with the Catholic subjects of King James. Philip IV. might ruthlessly cut down all pensions; the veterans in the Netherlands might plead in vain for their arrears of pay.¹ But the demands of the friendly Irish, the Earls of Tyrone and Tirconnel and their followers, of the exiled English Catholics in Spain and in the Netherlands, and of the English College at Douai, founded by Philip II., must at all costs be satisfied.²

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xi., July 30th, 1621, etc.

² Brussels Archives, vol. xvi., July 30th and September 2nd, 1624.

But now the time seemed ripe for more active measures, and once more the "enterprise of England" was to the fore. Spain was intoxicated by her successes. It seemed to Philip that he was in a better position for making an attack than his grandfather had been. France was his ally, pledged to help him in his undertaking. For in the spring of 1626, a treaty had been signed between the Count-Duke of Olivares and the Count of Rochepot whereby the Kings of Spain and France agreed to attack England jointly, and in the event of success to divide England between them and restore the Catholic faith. It mattered not to Philip and Olivares that the treaty with France was obviously only transitory; that Spain owed it to Richelieu's temporary difficulties with England.¹ Philip saw with anguish the exhaustion of Castile; he came into bitter conflict with his free cortes of Valencia and Catalonia in his efforts to extort from them the money necessary for his new scheme. Yet he seems never to have contemplated his project as other than a necessary and honourable part of the policy to which he was bound.

Olivares' plan was dependent for success on the co-operation of the Infanta. The attack on England was to be directed chiefly from the Netherlands. Already in 1625, before he was at peace with France, the King had ordered Isabel to gain a foothold in Ireland,² contemplating an attack on England through this ever open back-door. With the adherence of France in the spring of 1626 his plans became more settled. A strong fleet was to be formed in the Netherlands, and Spinola was appointed captain-general of the navy. The war on land was to be

¹ Gachard, "Histoire de Rubens."

² Brussels Archives, vol. xviii. Nov. 5th, 1625.

merely defensive, in order that an offensive war might be waged by sea. This naval war was no doubt largely aimed at the Dutch, whose capacity for resistance lay chiefly in their power at sea. But that England was for the present uppermost in the mind of the Spanish minister may be seen from the reason put forward for the construction of a harbour at Gravelines. "The Great Armada of 1588 perished through not having a harbour to put into on the Flanders coast."¹ Such a harbour was now to be made for the armada of Philip IV. It was a project which had long been meditated. But it had been prevented by the opposition of the King of France. Now he was ready to agree to the design.

While the attack upon England was in contemplation, a new and elaborate plan for the closer union of the Spanish dominions was sent to the Netherlands. It was purely military in conception; and consisted in the raising of a fixed quota of troops from each territory belonging to Spain. The heaviest burden was, naturally, to be borne by Castile and the Indies which were to provide 44,000 troops out of a total of 140,000; the quota of the Netherlands being 12,000 troops.² Each province, when at war, was to receive aid from the rest of his Majesty's territories, of 20,000 foot and 4000 horse, supplied by them in the ratio of their quotas. For such a scheme, the consent of the Netherlands was necessary; and in the course of 1627, Diego Messia, the Marquis of Legañes arrived in Brussels for this purpose. He had come through Paris, where he had been pleading for a united Spanish and French attack

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xix. Feb. 7th, 1626.

² Brussels Archives, vol. xx. August 9th, 1626.

upon England. He bore instructions to urge upon Isabel the necessity for immediate action.

The breaking of the peace with England had greatly distressed the Infanta. She urged the King of Spain not to be the aggressor, warning him that if it were seen that he contemplated fresh conquests enemies would arise all around him.¹ She parried his order for an attack through Ireland, at the time of Wimbledon's expedition to Cadiz. She felt that her resources were inadequate for the burden already laid upon them; she was determined that she would take no part in so hopeless an enterprise as that contemplated by Spain. Assured in her own mind that the plan could never come to anything, and that Richelieu was only awaiting an opportunity to come to terms with England, and thus leave himself free to hurl all his forces against Spain, she was, while Philip was urging her to prepare for war, entertaining suggestions of peace from England.

In England, zeal for the cause of the Elector Palatine had not outlived the ill-starred expedition of Mansfeld. The Parliament, which had been so urgent for war, now began to clamour for peace, and to withhold from Charles I. the supplies which they had been so ready to grant to James. Charles had inherited a large debt from his father, and already the difficulties between King and Parliament were beginning. Buckingham, the most popular man in England at the time of the breaking of the Spanish match, was now the most hated. He was blamed for the loss of the men who went out with Mansfeld, for the hated French marriage which Charles had contracted. In their eagerness for the match, James and Charles had promised concessions

¹ Letter, May 20th, 1624, in Villermont, "Mansfeld," ii. pp. 217-8.

to the Catholics in England, which, when Parliament met, they were unable to fulfil. War in consequence broke out between England and France; and Buckingham prepared to give help to the Huguenots, whom Richelieu was engaged in subduing. In these circumstances peace with Spain seemed a necessity. In the beginning of 1627 Buckingham sent a priest to Madrid to express his regret at the breach of friendship between the two kings.¹ His overtures to the Infanta were of a more definite nature. He obtained a passport for his agent, Balthazar Gerbier, the painter, to come to Brussels to negotiate with his fellow-artist Rubens.

Gerbier had been with Buckingham when he went to Paris in 1625 to fetch Charles I.'s bride. At the time, Rubens was employed in the French capital, in placing in the Luxemburg the pictures which he had painted for Marie de' Medici. A friendship sprang up between the two, and they corresponded when Gerbier returned to London and Rubens to Brussels. Gerbier had meanwhile combined the offices of picture-dealer and diplomatist, two pursuits not calculated to develop a strict regard for veracity. In 1626 he had negotiated the sale of a collection of Rubens' pictures to his employer, the Duke of Buckingham. The negotiation upon which Rubens and Gerbier were now to be engaged was hardly calculated to make their relations more amicable. Gerbier was quite satisfied as to the pacific intentions of the Infanta and of the Marquis Spinola. He grew more and more impatient at the prevarications of Spain. To conclude a speedy peace or truce was of the utmost importance to England. Philip IV. was anxious, above all, to gain time. True, he had

¹ Gachard, "*Histoire politique et diplomatique de Rubens.*"

planned an attack on England, but he need not for that reason reject Buckingham's overtures.

Isabel was ordered to lend an ear to his suggestions. Rubens was instructed to calm Gerbier's growing irritation, by assuring him that on the arrival of Legañes he would receive a more definite answer. Meanwhile, the time seemed ripe for the attack on England. Buckingham was in France, leading an army against the Island of Ré, where the united fleets of France and Spain were opposed to him. England, Philip imagined, must be denuded of defence; and thus, at small cost to herself, Isabel might strike a great blow. Richelieu, in the French King's name, no doubt for his own purpose, supported the Spanish view of the condition of England. To her amazement Isabel learnt that 1500 men seemed to Philip a sufficient number with which to make an attempt on the English coast. She declared that to attack a country so well provided with men, as was England, with so paltry a force, would bring destruction to the reputation of Spain.¹ The attack, to prove effective, must be very powerful. For herself, she was unable to supply any adequate assistance.

Isabel was undoubtedly right in refraining from so hopeless an effort. She was scarcely able to hold her ground against the Dutch. The English, though they refused to co-operate with the Duke of Buckingham, would have been ready enough, in spite of their anger with the Government, to defend their own coasts. Isabel had no wish to add another, and a most futile, to the armadas which had suffered disaster in the English seas. She had, moreover, no desire to jeopardize her chance of securing a firm peace with England.

¹ Brussels Archives, xxii. August 23rd, 1627.

In one respect only could she further the King of Spain's policy. She was ready to support the plan for the military union of the Spanish dominions. She hoped, no doubt, to derive benefit from the provision that no Spanish possession which was at war should be required to send troops out of its territory. Were this enforced, the drain from the Netherlands into the Empire might cease. By the end of the year she was able to congratulate her nephew on the skilful manner in which the Marquis of Legañes had smoothed the way for the consent of the States. But neither this plan nor the enterprise against England ever reached fruition. While Isabel supported the one, and fenced with the royal commands with regard to the other, a fresh issue arose which absorbed the whole energies of Spain. It involved a preliminary encounter in the long duel between the Habsburg and the Bourbon, which was to transfer the ascendancy in Europe from Spain to France.

The peace between the two powers had been dictated by their necessities, and should occasion offer would, quite certainly, be very easily broken. It had been very useful to Richelieu, who was able, in the interval, to bring the Huguenots to their knees, and inflict a rebuff on the English. His work was not yet complete, and he would have been content to allow the hollow truce to continue yet awhile. But neither he, nor the Count-Duke of Olivares, could overlook the pretext supplied by the Mantuan succession question.

At the close of 1627 Duke Vincent of Mantua died, leaving the succession in dispute between two claimants. Of these, one was the Duke of Nevers, a Gonzaga by birth, a Frenchman by allegiance. It was certain that Richelieu would support him, in the hope of obtaining

a strong outpost of France in Italy. Mantua lay to the east of the Spanish duchy of Milan; Montferrat (a part of the Mantuan inheritance) to the west, between Milan and the duchy of Savoy, the saddle-bag lying athwart the French and Italian flanks of the Alps. In order to forestall Richelieu's expected action, Olivares determined to strike at once; and Cordova, the Governor of Milan, occupied the Montferrat and besieged Casale, the capital. The pretext was extraordinarily poor. Cordova acted, it was said, in the name of the Emperor, whose duty as suzerain it was to maintain the peace in Italy. Yet it is evident that, at the moment, Ferdinand had no desire to exercise this antiquated authority.¹ The Infanta, too, was against the undertaking, which she foresaw would prove an additional strain upon her burdened territories. Troops were necessary, and Isabel was ordered to provide from 6000 to 10,000 men in Burgundy, ready for Cordova's use. This she declared to be utterly impossible. Even such men as she could raise were delayed for days by her inability to pay them.

The interference of Spain in Italy brought her face to face with France. There was but a short respite, while Richelieu set his house in order. The assassination of Buckingham, when setting out on a second expedition, after his disastrous failure at Oléron in 1627, very much simplified the minister's difficulties. The fleet sailed without the Duke, and arrived too late to save La Rochelle, which surrendered towards the end of the year (October, 1628). It was the last Huguenot stronghold in France, and the surrender left

¹ Brussels Archives, xxiii., Feb. 12th and 15th, 1628. Letters of King to Aytona and Isabel.

the Protestants at the feet of Richelieu, who was now free to hurl his whole force against Spain. In the spring of 1629 Louis XIII. and the Cardinal in person invaded Italy, forced the Spaniards to withdraw, and established the Duke of Nevers in Mantua. Cordova was forced to evacuate Montferrat under the eye of Richelieu, who remained at Susa to watch over the important frontier province of Savoy.

Meanwhile Charles I., weary of the endless negotiations with Spain, was as ready as was Richelieu to come to terms. He was already deeply involved in his difficulties with his Parliament. He was anxious to have his hands free, and in April 1629 peace was concluded between England and France. What Isabel had foreseen had happened. Spain was about to enter into a great struggle with France, while she was still not at peace with England.

The news of the treaty between England and France seemed to awaken Spanish politicians from the security into which they had lulled themselves. More than two years had elapsed since Gerbier had made the first overtures of peace on behalf of Buckingham. When the knowledge of the contemplated attack on England came to Gerbier's ears, it required all Isabel's tact, and her well-known desire for peace, to prevent the agent from returning to England in wrath. Rubens was forced to insist that the blame for the combination must rest solely on Olivares; and to express the hope that the Spanish fleet would receive a good drubbing, so that the impetuosity of the Count-Duke might be the means of doing good in some way.¹ Yet no effort was made

¹ Sainsbury, p. 97. Gerbier to Sec. Conway, Sept. 1627.

to come to terms with England, even after the opening of hostilities in Italy. The first important step to advance negotiations was taken in the autumn of 1628, when Rubens was summoned from the Netherlands to Madrid, to lay before the council his correspondence with Gerbier. For seven months he remained there, while the deliberations of the council were apparently fruitless. He was in high favour with the King, and with the minister. Philip had expressed his displeasure when Isabel first employed Rubens on an important diplomatic mission, declaring that the employment of a personage of such low rank as a painter would bring discredit on the Crown of Spain.¹ Now he found himself completely charmed, as were all who came into contact with this "prince of painters and of gentlemen." He would pay him almost daily visits at his studio in the palace, watching and talking while Rubens painted.

While Rubens enjoyed the life in Madrid, in the companionship of the young Velasquez, already court-painter, and the acknowledged master among Spanish artists; while, at the Infanta's order, he painted the portraits of her relatives in Madrid, his mission did not prosper. No doubt Philip, liking the company of the genial painter, was in no haste to part from him. But, whatever the danger which delays might bring, nothing could curtail the tortuous methods of Spanish diplomacy. There were many preliminary difficulties to be settled. The Irish Earls, who had been in communication with Spain, were dismayed at the sudden cessation of the intrigues of the Spanish ministers, and angrily demanded the armed assistance which they had been led to expect. Charles I. in-

¹ "Histoire de Rubens," Gachard. Letter, June 15th, 1627.

sisted on the inclusion of the Dutch in any treaty which might be made, and demanded some definite concession with regard to the Palatinate. It was not until Charles was known to be negotiating with France (April, 1629), that Olivares decided to send Rubens to England as a step towards an understanding with the King. On his way to London he passed through Brussels. Isabel hastened his departure; but she found time to take from him the bills of exchange, of which he was the bearer. Only the most imminent danger could have led Isabel to a course of action which she knew must increase Rubens' difficulties in England. But she was in a desperate situation. Her territories were invaded, and in the bad condition in which Spanish affairs stood in Italy, she had no hope of receiving help.

The charm of Rubens' personality, and his ability as a diplomatist, were put to a severe test in England. As an artist, Charles I. received him with delight. As the ambassador of Spain, English ministers looked upon him with suspicion. It was a great proof of his tact, that in a few months he had so far cleared away preliminary difficulties, that Cottington was sent from England as ambassador to Madrid, while Don Carlos Coloma came from the Netherlands to London to represent Spain. Then began in Madrid the lying and haggling, the flattery and the delays, so dear to the soul of Olivares. He played the game for its full value, and Charles was finally beaten. He was in desperate need of peace; so was Spain. But the bland diplomatist who ruled her was skilful enough to conceal her exhaustion from the English envoy. Charles finally gave way and consented to make a

treaty with Spain, on the basis of the treaty of 1604, leaving all questions still unsettled, and the Palatine dispossessed of his lands.

Thus ended the intervention of England in the Thirty Years' War, an intervention as futile as it proved disastrous to the King. With this treaty ends also the succession of Spanish designs upon England, born of the hostility between the champions of Catholicism and Protestantism, in the days following the Reformation. Though the diplomacy of Olivares had finally triumphed, Spain suffered in delaying the peace with England. For she had now no time to prepare herself for the life and death struggle with France which was upon her.

In the hostilities with England the people of the Netherlands had been the greatest sufferers. The Flemish coasts had been a prey to the depredations of the English mariners, the merchants and the populace in general had suffered from the prohibitions put upon trade during the period of hostility between Spain and England. The Netherlands and England had indeed no cause of quarrel. From the point of view of commerce, which had been, and should still have been, the chief source of the wealth of the Netherlands, the two countries were, as they had been for many centuries, necessary to each other. The treaty of peace of 1630, for which Isabel had laboured for so many years, by freeing the intercourse with England, removed a barrier to the prosperity of the Flemish cities.

CHAPTER XV

ISABEL'S DIFFICULTIES AND MISFORTUNES

The strength of the Dutch—Their trade—Spanish attempts to ruin it—The proposal to form commercial companies in Spain, on the model of the Dutch and English India Companies—The formation of a fleet at Dunkirk—The project of a system of canals—The Fossa Eugenia—Attempts to exclude the Dutch from Germany—The King of Spain's desire to control the Baltic—The purpose of Wallenstein's campaign in the Baltic—The war in the Netherlands—Complaints concerning extravagance—Isabel's lack of adequate supplies—The campaign of 1627—The loss of Grol—Spinola leaves for Spain—Miserable condition of the Netherlands in 1629—The Dutch capture Wesel and Bois-le-duc, "the virgin of Brabant"—The negotiations for peace with the Dutch come to an end—The complaints against the government—The petition of the nobility and clergy—The unpopularity of the Cardinal de la Cueva—The system of government—The Councils superseded by "juntas"—The recall of Cueva—Aytona succeeds him—His suggestions for reform—His advice not heeded—The discontent increases

IN her struggle with the Dutch, Spain was confronted by a force little understood by the Spaniards as a people. Spain had arisen as an outpost of Christian Europe against Islam; when they first became a nation, the Spaniards were a nation of warriors and crusaders. They had early expelled the Moorish and Jewish population, the agricultural and industrial elements in the land. Commerce was held in contempt by the poor but proud Castilian gentleman. Spain drew her wealth from her colonies, not by way of commerce, but in vast cargoes of silver taken from the

mines of the New World. The Dutch were, through their position and their natural resources, a nation of traders. The Hollanders and Zeelanders had learnt seamanship in their struggles to keep their homes from submersion in the ocean. When the time came, and the Dutch, as well as the English, began to seek a wider field for their activities, their hostility to Spain gave an impetus to their adventurers. Patient and plodding in the pursuit of commercial prosperity, the Dutch merchants were soon rich enough to carry their trade over the seas, and to dispute the possession of the New World with their former masters.

The Spaniards were not slow to realize the danger which threatened them from their rebel provinces, who possessed so little territory, and yet were able to attack them with a new and formidable force. The Spanish ministers tried, in vain, in the truce of 1609, to exclude the Dutch from trading with the Indies, still maintaining their old pretension to a monopoly. That their position was no longer tenable was evident from their inability to prevent the continual increase in the power of the Dutch both in Europe and in the New World. Gradually it became evident to Spain that trade was not merely an occupation, but the very life-blood of the United Provinces; and that in order to bring the Dutch to submission, Spain must strike at their commerce and their fisheries, the two pillars which upheld their state.

One plan was proposed in Madrid, which, to all appearances, was relinquished almost as soon as suggested, but which seems to show that there was some understanding of the disease which was consuming Spain. In 1624 the King announced his intention of forming commercial

companies in Spain, in order to restore the decadent trade of his country, and to compete with the Dutch India Companies. The Infanta was ordered to secure, by any means in her power, copies of the charters of both the English and Dutch companies, that they might be used in Spain when opportunity offered.¹ Could this plan have been adopted earlier, it might have prevented the decay of Spain. The formation of trading companies, however, requires the existence of a prosperous commercial class, which it would have needed much fostering care to create in Spain. Either the project was found impossible or it was only a passing idea; there is no trace of any effort to put it into execution.

The Spanish Netherlands were clearly more fitted to oppose the maritime enterprise of the Dutch than was Spain. The geographical situation of the Southern Provinces was akin to that of the Northern. The past glories achieved by the Flemish manufacturing cities in the sphere of trade were world-renowned. They might yet contest with the United Provinces the dominion of the seas, which these threatened to wrest from Spain. A fleet was started at Dunkirk, not only to facilitate communication with Spain, but to compete with the Dutch mercantile marine. For years the corsairs were the terror of the Dutch privateers, with whom they waged a war of reprisals along the coast. The Flemings were not unsuccessful; and towards the end of Isabel's life, Aytona wrote to Olivares that he had captured 400 vessels from the enemy in less than a year, without losing a single one.²

¹ "Correspondence," Brussels Archives, vol. xv., April 22nd, 1624, King to Infanta.

² Waddington, "*La République, la France et les Pays-Bas*," p. 140.

A more elaborate attack was directed against the Dutch trade with Germany and in the Baltic. Spinola, early in his campaigns, had begun a series of canals between the seaports of Flanders—Dunkirk, Nieuport and Ostend—and the city of Bruges. It had been his intention to carry on these canals to Ghent and thence to Antwerp; and thus to make good the loss which Antwerp suffered through the retention by the Dutch of the forts in the mouth of the Scheldt, and the consequent closing of the river to Flemish trade. Spinola and Isabel now conceived the idea of extending this system, by diverting the trade of Germany from the United Provinces to the Spanish Netherlands. A canal was to be made between the Rhine and the Meuse, which was to drain the traffic from the one river to the other, and, moreover, act as a defence against the armies of Frederick Henry of Nassau. Completed, the system of waterways was to consist of a canal from Rheinberg on the Rhine to Venloo on the Meuse.¹ Thence it was to be continued to the Demer, a little river which rises in Liège, not far from Maestricht on the Meuse, and disembogues into the Scheldt. In this way, the Scheldt would be connected with the Rhine on the east, and, according to the earlier plans, with the coast of Flanders on the west. It was hoped by thus threading the Netherlands with a string of canals from end to end, to restore to Antwerp the supremacy which Amsterdam, in the eyes of the Flemings, had usurped. The Fossa Eugenia, as the waterway between the Rhine and the Meuse was called, was begun in Upper Gueldres, and amid much enthusiasm a good portion of it was completed (1627).

¹ Villa, "Spinola," p. 457.

But it aroused great opposition on the part of the Dutch, who intervened in arms, and finally forced Isabel to abandon the scheme. The treaty of Münster in 1648 placed a further obstacle in the way. But Spinola's idea was not destined to oblivion. Revived again early in the eighteenth century under the Austrian régime,¹ and once more frustrated by the opposition of the Dutch, the project was finally to receive the distinction of adoption by Napoleon Buonaparte.²

While Isabel worked within her provinces, the King of Spain was agitating in Europe, to exclude his enemies from trading in Germany. Troops were lent to the Catholic Elector of Cologne, to seize Saint Goar on the Rhine, so that the whole river down to Dutch territory might be in the hands of the King of Spain's allies. The subjects of the Duke of Neuburg, whose territories lay between the Dutch and the Empire, were not allowed, although their ruler maintained a neutral attitude, to trade with the Dutch, for fear that their goods should be passed on to Germany.³ For months Isabel was urged to importune the Emperor to close the rivers Weser and Elbe against the Dutch, and thus exclude them from trading in the Empire altogether. The Baltic was the particular object of the King of Spain's care. He had learnt that the Dutch and the English drew thence the greater part of their provisions, and all their materials for ship-building ;⁴ and that they would thus be severely crippled if this market were closed against them.

¹ (By Maximilian of Bavaria, the Governor.)

² Namèche, "Cours d'histoire nationale," vol. xxii. pp. 283 *seq.*

³ Brussels Archives, Sept. 17th, 1626.

⁴ Brussels Archives, vol. xxi., April 22nd, 1627.

Philip was therefore most anxious for a hold in the Baltic. During Wallenstein's first campaign, he begged Isabel to urge the Emperor to allow his commander to seize a port there in his (the King of Spain's) name.¹ His demands later became more precise. He proposed that the Emperor should ask the Duke of Pomerania for a port in the Baltic, and the King of Poland for one in Prussia, and that these should be put into his hands. When his request was refused, he could only urge the Infanta to send prompt and plentiful aid to the King of Poland, in his struggle for supremacy on the Northern seas against Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

The knowledge of these aspirations on the part of Spain lends colour to the suggestion, that Wallenstein's campaign in the Baltic in 1628 was dictated, at any rate in part, by a desire to strike a blow at English and Dutch commerce. He was anxious, as was also the King of Spain, for an understanding with the Hanse towns. No doubt he needed their fleet in order to complete the subjugation of Christian of Denmark, and to prevent Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden from renewing the war. He was Admiral of the Baltic, but as yet he had no ships. He attempted to bribe the Hanse into resigning their fleet by a promise to divert the world-trade from Amsterdam to Hamburg, an indication of the ideas which he had in his mind. But for his rebuff before the walls of Stralsund, Wallenstein might have exchanged his war-horse for a galley, and swept the seas in the service of the Emperor and the King of Spain.

While Isabel was assigned a chief part in the project

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xx., Oct. 11th, 1626.

against England, and while the plans were going forward for the commercial destruction of the United Provinces, the land-war still simmered on. Olivares had commanded that, in order to facilitate an offensive war by sea, the war on land was to be defensive only. In this way he hoped to lessen the drain of resources from Spain to the Netherlands. He complained of the extravagance of the officers, asked for detailed accounts of expenses, forbade the granting of any pensions which would burden the Infanta's provinces. He provided an elaborate scheme, pointing out how the provinces could bear more of the cost of defence;¹ how they might economize by not garrisoning the forts on the French frontier unless war was raging with France. On her side the Infanta pointed out that she found it impossible to put into the field the numbers suggested by Olivares. The provinces were jealous of their privileges, and would never grant subsidies for more than six months. How was she to recruit, when she found difficulty in giving the men their earnest-money; and when they had no prospect, after years of service, but to retire with no pension, and with their pay owing, sometimes for years? Spinola declared that, though the war was defensive, two armies were still needed—one to guard the Rhine, and one to watch over Flanders and Brabant.² To maintain these and an offensive war by sea, a supply of 300,000 crowns a month from Spain was as necessary as before, and this sum was rarely forthcoming. The Infanta had pledged her jewels and her silver, the ministers had mortgaged their property. The government was already deeply in debt, the

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xx., Oct. 1626.

² Villa, "Spinola," pp. 466 *seq.*

interest on the loans was naturally increasing, and the merchants were becoming clamorous.

The Infanta's prophecy, that if the enemy took the field her generals would have to look on helplessly, seemed likely to be fulfilled. Frederick Henry, now Prince of Orange, appeared before Grol, a place in Zutphen, important for the protection of the Duchy of Gueldres. He managed to fortify himself before van den Berg, the Flemish general, could come to the relief. Finding the besiegers in too strong a position for attack, Berg tried to intercept their convoys. But he failed; and Grol, which the Spaniards had held since 1606, fell to the Dutch. At the end of the year Spinola departed to Spain, and the command was left in the hands of Don Carlos Coloma and Count Henry van den Berg. That nothing prospered was no cause for wonder. At the beginning of 1629 Isabel wrote to Spain: "We have here neither money, powder, ammunition, nor artillery. The places are stripped of all means of defence, and the troops, who have not been paid for four months, are living on ammunition-bread alone.¹ Moreover, more than 100,000 crowns are owing to the contractors." At the end of March, Isabel wrote that she could not find the money to pay the troops even for the ensuing month. A month later, at the end of April, the Dutch opened the campaign by attacking Bois-le-Duc, on the extreme north of Brabant, close to the Dutch frontier.

Among all the vicissitudes of her neighbours, Bois-le-duc, "the virgin of Brabant," had never fallen into the hand of a conqueror. The province was now to suffer this further humiliation. Van den Berg, finding Orange

¹ Waddington. Also Juste, "Conspiration de la Noblesse Belge."

strongly entrenched by the time that he was able to reach Bois-le-duc, decided to create a diversion by attacking the province of Utrecht, and thus forcing Orange to raise the siege. He had been joined by some Imperialist troops set free by the Treaty of Lübeck. Crossing the Yssel, they entered the Veluwe, and had penetrated as far as Amersfort on the frontier of Utrecht, when news came of the capture of Wesel on the Rhine, in Cleves, by the Governor of Emmerich (August 19th).¹ Wesel was the base whence the army in the Veluwe drew their ammunition and provisions. With their base cut off, they could not proceed. They were forced to retire, and the Governor of Bois-le-duc, despairing of relief, surrendered on September 14th.

Bitter was the outcry against Spain, at the loss of Bois-le-duc and Wesel. The warnings of the Sieur de Grobbendonc, the Governor of Bois-le-duc, that he was not sufficiently supplied to defend the town, had been disregarded by the Government. Now that the town was in Dutch hands, the churches were profaned, and the clergy, and the intensely Catholic population, expelled. The Flemings felt that heavy as was the price which they paid for the presence of foreign troops and foreign ministers, these were not even able to defend them from attack. More, they declared that the King of Spain was responsible for the continuation of the war; and this was in great measure true.

The peace negotiations with the Dutch, never wholly relinquished by the Infanta, had been taken up seriously at the time of Gerbier's sojourn in the Netherlands. The King of England considered his honour pledged to include the Dutch in the treaty, and the Infanta eagerly

¹ Biographie Nationale de Belgique. "Berg."

seized the opportunity. On one point she was quite clear; the navigation of the Scheldt was the point first to be discussed.¹ It was the question which was of the greatest importance for the prosperity of her territories. During the last truce they had been harmed neither by the fact that the King of Spain had dealt with the United Provinces as a free state, nor by the refusal of the Dutch to grant concessions to the Catholics in their provinces. But their commerce had suffered, when Antwerp ceased to be the depot of Europe. Isabel declared that if the question of the sovereignty of Spain, or of religion were discussed, nothing could possibly come of the negotiations. This does not mean that Isabel admitted the right of the United Provinces to form an independent state. She probably still regarded them as rebels; but she knew that to assert any authority over them was not within the realm of practical politics.

Not so, the King of Spain; his pretensions were not less than those of his fathers. On four conditions alone would he come to terms with the Dutch: they must renounce the India trade; open the Scheldt for Flemish trade; yield on the point of their freedom; and suffer the free exercise of the Catholic religion in their states. The last two conditions were considered indispensable.²

It was much that, under these circumstances, Isabel succeeded in opening negotiations at all. When the Dutch and Flemish deputies met at Rossendal on the frontier of Brabant in the summer of 1628, the King's pretensions received a rude shock. He was obliged to yield his points one by one. The Dutch deputies de-

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xxi. April 17th, 1627.

² Brussels Archives, vol. xxiii. March 21st, 1628.

clared that it was absolutely impossible to grant liberty of worship to the Catholics in the Provinces. They pointed out that such a concession, even if made, must remain a dead letter, as the antipathy against the Catholics was so strong among the populace, that even the Prince of Orange could not stand against it. On this point Philip was thus forced to give way. And early in 1629 came also his tardy grant of freedom to trade with the Indies—he gave what it was not in his power to withhold.

On one point Philip IV. refused to yield:—he would make no declaration which prejudiced his authority with regard to the rebellious provinces. Many expedients were suggested to safeguard Spanish pride; the King might deal with the Dutch as the allies of the King of England; he had but to say that the articles of the truce remained as they had been in the truce of 1609. On this the Dutch insisted; they could not be satisfied with less. They must be dealt with as a free people, as in the previous truce. In vain Isabel pointed out that his Majesty suffered no derogation in yielding in a matter of so little practical importance. During any truce, the King could certainly pretend to no claim over the Dutch; and when the truce expired the terms on which it had been concluded also ceased, and thus his Majesty would be in the same position with regard to his authority over the Dutch as he was now. Isabel exhausted her ingenuity in her attempts to bring the King to terms. She urged him to consider how disastrous a peace would be to the Dutch, who existed only to war against Spain, and were once again torn by sectarian strife. She declared that as Philip had given way on

the question of religion, if he refused to yield on the point of his sovereignty, he would seem to care more for the kingdom of earth, than for the kingdom of God.¹

Had Philip given way before the Dutch took the field, all might perhaps have been well. Richelieu no doubt would have opposed a settlement between Spain and the Provinces; but in the difficulties which the renewed strife of Gomarists and Arminians were bringing upon the Dutch, Orange might perhaps have been glad of a compromise. But by the time Philip had been convinced of Isabel's need, and sent her powers to make a peace on the terms to which alone the Dutch would consent, it was too late. The position of the United Provinces was steadily improving, and it was their turn to raise their terms and to prevaricate.

While they prolonged the negotiations, Wesel and Bois-le-duc fell. With these two posts in their hands, the Dutch were no longer in danger. Indeed, they held two important keys, and might look forward to a successful advance into the enemy's territory. France was offering them large sums to continue the war. They felt that they no longer needed peace; and the war-party continually gained in strength. Isabel had once more failed to secure a settlement, and the war dragged drearily on.

When the question of peace came up again, the Dutch were strong in their victories and in their external alliances, while Isabel was oppressed by conspiracy within her dominions. The Dutch in their turn demanded terms which would have substituted either their authority or, more probably,

¹ Brussels Archives vol. xxvi. June 3rd, 1629.

that of France, for the Spanish dominion in the Southern Provinces. The Southern Estates themselves rebelled against peace on such conditions, and thus the Infanta, in spite of all her efforts, left to the Netherlands a legacy of war.

The loss of Wesel and Bois-le-duc, as has been said, brought the discontent against the Government to a crisis. Already, earlier in the year, the nobles and clergy had presented to the Infanta, by the hands of the Duke of Arschot and the Archbishop of Malines, an indictment of the Spanish rule, which they blamed for all their misfortunes. They gave Isabel to understand that they would waive all claims to help from Spain in men and money, if Spain would cease to send the officers and ministers who misruled them. They declared their readiness to defend their country and their religion against their enemies, if the management of affairs were left to the natives of the country, under the dominion of the Infanta and the King of Spain.¹ The distinction drawn between the Infanta and her Spanish advisers, was a convenient method of protesting their loyalty to the Crown, while indicting the system of government. The resentment which the complaint of the nobility and clergy voiced, was concentrated, after the disastrous campaign of 1629, in a fierce attack on the Cardinal de la Cueva, the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, and Isabel's chief adviser.

Cueva had served the Crown of Spain in other lands besides the Netherlands. He had been ambassador in Venice at the time of the celebrated and mysterious conspiracy, which was to deliver the Queen of the

¹ Juste, "La Conspiration de la Noblesse Belge."

Adriatic into the hands of Spain. Recalled after the failure of the plot, he had since that time held the position of Spanish Ambassador to the Netherlands. He was a famous diplomatist; but the Netherlanders would not have subscribed to his biographer's¹ praise of his gentleness, his understanding of men, and his ability. They found him harsh and despotic; and in a very short time he seems to have drawn general unpopularity upon himself. Already in 1624, Trumbull, the English agent in Brussels,² describing a fire which took place in the Orange palace in Brussels, in which Cueva lodged, reported that "many men saye that the common people of this country were more greeved for the losse of that stately Pallace, than they would have ben for the Cardinall (who is not wellbeloved) if he had perished in the flames." While Spinola remained in the Netherlands, Cueva shared the authority with the Genoese—almost as able an administrator as he was a general—who was not too partial to his methods. But after his departure Cueva reigned supreme, and soon made himself hated by his dictatorial manners and his disregard of national privileges.

The Government of the Netherlands, in the time of the Archdukes, rested in the hands of three councils: the Council of State, the Privy Council, and the Council of Finances. Of these the Council of State consisted of the great nobles of the country, who also had the entrée to the Council of Finances. At one time the influence of the Council of State had preponderated. But it had seemed to give the native nobility a dangerous power.

¹ The Abbot of St Réal.

² To Sec. Calvert, March 16th, 1624. Record Office, "Foreign Office, State Papers, Flanders," vol. xvii.

The Council was gradually shorn of its authority, and in the seventeenth century retained only the shadow of former glory.¹ The real authority thus fell to the Privy Council, a body of jurists who conducted the administration of the interior.² It was one of the privileges sworn to by the sovereigns in the Joyeuse Entrée, that this Council should contain none but Brabantines; and thus the President of the Privy Council, one of the first men in the State, must be a native of the Netherlands.

Under Cueva's rule, the chief authority in the State was arrogated by two committees or "juntas," which now sprang up. One of these had the care of the army and of fortresses and was made up exclusively of Spaniards. It met once a week, and perhaps oftener towards the end of Isabel's reign. The second junta, or "conseil adjoint," met twice a week, and discussed questions of trade and negotiations. The chief Flemish ministers were admitted to this committee; Philip Maes, the President of the Privy Council; Boisschot, the Chancellor of Brabant; the Audiencier, Louis Verreyken, the most influential of all; and Steenhuyjs, the chief steward of the royal household.³ But both committees were under the exalted direction of the Cardinal de la Cueva,⁴ and met, not in the royal palace, but at his residence. At about the same time, in 1628, Philip IV. revived in Madrid the Council of Flanders and Burgundy, which arrogated to itself unlimited powers. Practically all the members were Spaniards, and no doubt were nearly as ignorant with

¹ Waddington.

² Hagemans, "Relations inédites d'Ambassadeurs vénitiens."

³ Henne and Wauters, "Ville de Bruxelles," ii.

⁴ Brussels Archives, vol. xxvi. Nov. 14th, 1629.

regard to the affairs which they controlled as the Flemish nobility declared. Everything depended upon this council, to whose orders the ministers in Brussels had to submit.

So great was the unpopularity of Cueva after the unfortunate campaign of 1629, that the Infanta feared almost for his life. Even in Spain it was seen to be impossible that he should remain in the Netherlands, and towards the end of the year he was ordered to proceed to Rome. His place as ambassador was taken by Francis de Moncada, Marquis of Aytona, a statesman of far greater ability than Cueva.¹ Shrewd, courteous, and kindly, he possessed that intuition to understand the needs of those whom he was set to rule, which Cueva had so conspicuously lacked. He was not to blame for the disasters which overtook the Netherlands, and so darkened the last years of the Infanta. Had his advice been followed, the Netherlands would probably have weathered the storm which Cueva's despotism had aroused, and the Spanish dominion might not have been threatened with destruction by the force of internal revolt.

In the first days after his arrival, Aytona showed his understanding of the difficulties which faced him. He considered a truce with the Dutch of the utmost importance. Without it, it seemed possible that the Netherlands would either be conquered by the Dutch, or strive to form an independent republic. In the event of a war with France, the territory might even be divided between the French and the United Provinces. Aytona declared that Cueva's arbitrary system of government by "juntas" was the cause of

¹ Waddington. And Biographie nationale de Belgique "Aytona."

the unrest. "If the Marquis of Mirabel and I have to maintain this system," he wrote to Olivares on November 13th, "it will be all up with the Provinces. But if, on the other hand, we inaugurate a better rule, they will give their blood and their money for the service of his Majesty. We must treat the Belgians like good brothers; probably we shall have to call some of them to the Councils to inspire them with confidence."¹

A little later he wrote² that the only way to advance the cause of Spain was "to trust the salvation of their country and their religion to the nationalists. I do not know," he added, "how we may keep these provinces loyal to his Majesty if we distrust the people and give them no share in the government. Even had his Majesty a powerful army, strongly supported from Spain, I should consider it a perilous thing to treat these people badly and show contempt of them, when France, Holland, and England are stirring them up to expel us, and offering them assistance for the purpose."

A consideration of Aytona's arguments, and of the petition of the nobles and clergy, which Isabel had sent to Spain by the Count of Solre, a Flemish nobleman, should have awakened a memory in the minds of Spanish ministers to check them in their course. The complaint of the nobles against Cueva's juntas reproduced the complaint of the nobles against the Cardinal Granvelle's Consulta, in the days which preceded the revolt of the Northern Netherlands.

In those days, the greatest nobleman of the Nether-

¹ Waddington, p. 103.

² Gachard, *Biographie Nationale*, "Aytona," Letter to Olivares, December 5th, 1629.

lands, William of Orange, had led the people of the North to throw off the Spanish yoke. True, there was no religious grievance to stir up the Southern Provinces such as had torn the Low Countries in the days of William the Silent. But the sufferings of the people had been great. France and England seemed ready, as before, to strike at Spain through her possessions in the Netherlands. The example of the Northern Provinces was before the South.

But no presentiment of the evil which was threatening disturbed Philip IV.'s minister; or, if it did, he was too pre-occupied with other difficulties to listen to its warning. The Count of Solre returned from Spain, bringing with him, in answer to the petition of the nobles, vague promises, but no alleviation of their grievances. The hopeless centralization of the Spanish Empire, without the machinery necessary for speedy communication, made the position of the rulers of the Netherlands ever more desperate. In vain Aytona pleaded for a little more freedom of action. He pointed out the evils which were bound to result from the restrictions to which the ministers and generals were subjected, being forced to wait for instructions from Spain, (which took six weeks or two months to come), in matters which required prompt decision. A man of letters, he adduced a classic example in support of his argument: "The Romans, as your Excellency knows," he wrote to Olivares, "never gave any instructions to their generals and governors. Or, if ever they did, it was in very special cases, and for undertakings long premeditated."¹

While Aytona exerted every effort to reform the

¹ Gachard, *Biographie Nationale*, "Aytona," Jan. 18th, 1631.

disastrous system, the discontent was growing. The Estates of Brabant refused all subsidies, and accused the King of Spain himself of diverting, for the war in Italy, the money raised by taxes for the defence of the country. The nobility murmured and plotted, but they could effect little without a leader who would stake everything in a revolution. Such a leader they found in Count Henry van den Berg, who was ready, but unfitted in character and ability, to play the part in the South which William the Silent had played in the Northern Netherlands.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE BELGIAN NOBILITY

Count Henry van den Berg—His career—His difficulties—Quarrels between Spanish soldiers and those of other nations—His failure at Grol and at Bois-le-duc—Suspensions as to his fidelity—Fear of the Government, because of his power in Gueldres and in the army—Berg retains his office, though suspected—The appointment of Santa Cruz—The failure of the campaign in 1631—Plots among the Netherlands nobility—Difficulties of the Government, 1631-2—Intrigues with France and the United Provinces—Carondelet and Richelieu—The conspirators, nobles and officials—René de Renesse at the Hague—The partition of the Southern Netherlands arranged—Orange invades the South—Siege of Maestricht—Berg at Liège—His Manifesto—Isabel's reply—Failure of Berg's manifesto to rouse the army or the people—Berg's flight—Causes of his failure—Isabel summons the Estates-General—Fall of Maestricht—Loss of Limburg—The Estates-General at the Hague call on the Estates-General at Brussels to join them—Demands of the Brussels Estates—The negotiations between Dutch and Flemings at Maestricht, at the Hague—Exorbitant demands of the Dutch—The misunderstanding between Dutch and Flemings—The growing feeling in the United Provinces for war—Richelieu's agent at the Hague—The campaign of 1633—Isabel urges the Estates-General to continue the negotiations—She agrees to send the Duke of Arschot to Spain—Fate of the Estates-General of 1632—Of the conspirators—End of peace negotiations.

COUNT HENRY VAN DEN BERG¹ had been in the service of Spain since his boyhood. His father had fought first against and later on the side of Spain; his mother was the sister of William the Silent. The Count himself had a dis-

¹ Biographie Nationale de Belgique "Berg" (Article by Gachard).

tinguished career, and became successively a member of the Council of War and of the Council of State, and reached the rank of lieutenant-general of cavalry, which in 1626 he resigned in order to become captain-general of the artillery in the Netherlands. Since 1618 he had been captain-general of Gueldres, a position which gave him an authority in the province which was practically absolute. On Spinola's departure for Italy, Berg shared with Don Carlos Coloma the supreme command of the forces in the Netherlands. Yet latterly he had been unfortunate. For many years there had been complaints that he was unable to control his subordinate officers, and he was constantly in conflict with the Spaniards under his command. By a special decree of the King of Spain, which was continually reasserted, the Spaniards were always to enjoy the most favourable positions in the Netherlands army. They were to be employed in the van in engagements, they were to occupy separate quarters, their officers were preferred over the heads of native officers.

Even when he was successful and received the praise of his sovereign for his actions, Berg was harassed by complaints that the Spaniards among his forces had not been employed as they should have been. Lately he had had two reverses. In 1627 he had failed before Grol; and although he had been to a great extent exonerated, his failure had been partly due to a dispute between his Italian and Spanish troops for precedence, which could not redound to his credit. In 1629 he had again failed, this time before Bois-le-duc, and had thereby greatly damaged his reputation. Not only was his ability questioned, but grave doubts were entertained of his loyalty. Cardinal Cueva's last action

before resigning his office of ambassador into the hands of Aytona was to send to Spain a formal indictment of Berg's proceedings during the last campaign ;¹ in which, among other accusations, Berg was charged with having procured that the negotiations with the Dutch should pass through his hands, in order to prolong the period of treating for terms until Bois-le-duc had fallen.

Not only the Spanish officers, whom Berg accused of personal enmity to himself, but his cousin, Count John of Nassau, charged him with treachery. When Aytona arrived he found Berg discredited, and advised his supersession by Tilly or John of Nassau. The embarrassment of the Government was great. They suspected Berg, and perhaps already had good cause for their suspicion. But they did not dare to punish him. Proof would be difficult to secure, and great feeling would be roused by his accusation and his defence. More especially his powerful position in Gueldres—where the people, it was said, would experience greater horror at his punishment than at any of the crimes imputed to him, especially if inflicted by an alien Government on a noble of the country—made it extremely difficult to take any action against him. So no change was effected in Berg's command ; only it was sought to strengthen Nassau, who was known to be at strife with him.

Thus Isabel and Aytona were forced into a course of action which could have no good result. Berg, by nature fiery and uncompromising, retained his command, knowing that he was suspected and that his rulers were afraid to touch him. If he had not before begun to plot the overthrow of the Spanish Government, it seems almost certain that he was now entertaining communi-

¹ Brussel Archives, vol. xxvi. King to Infanta, Nov. 17th, 1629.

cations with her enemies.¹ The Infanta still hoped for his allegiance, and wrote to assure him of her satisfaction with his services. Aytona had begged for the return of Spinola, whose departure seemed the cause of much of the trouble. When he learnt that Spinola could not be summoned from Italy, he entreated that the military command might be given to some general of renown, in whose hand it might be concentrated, and the dangers of a divided authority thus be avoided. The choice of the Government fell on Don Alvarez de Bazan, Marquis of Santa Cruz. Obviously he must be advanced over both Nassau and Berg; for the promotion of either would have been intolerable to the other. Yet his appointment seemed to the malcontents a further evidence of Spanish despotism. Only a brilliant campaign could have stilled the public clamour against the new commander, and Santa Cruz's first campaign in 1631 was a failure. Yet his first action was completely successful. He advanced into Flanders, on which Orange had descended with a terrifying army, and forced him to retreat. It would have been wiser perhaps to rest on this first success; but Santa Cruz was rather naturally anxious to distinguish himself by some greater achievement. He determined to occupy some of the islands of Zeeland, in order to cut off this province from Holland. A fleet was collected at Antwerp and John of Nassau put in command. But neither the benediction of the Infanta nor of the papal nuncio could save the expedition from disaster. Only the sea-bred Zeelanders understood the navigation of the shallows which surrounded their island homes.

¹ Gachard, *Biographie nationale*, "Berg." Jan. 1630, Bautru to Richelieu.

The Walloon and Spanish mariners were baffled by the numerous small channels, and were continually running aground. They were harried by the Dutch, and were finally annihilated in a narrow arm of the sea to the north of the Island of Tholen. Hundreds were drowned, and thousands taken prisoners. John of Nassau himself with difficulty escaped in a small cutter.

Everything now seemed to favour Berg and the discontented nobility. The destruction of the expedition to Zeeland added to the dull despair of the people. A plot, originating among the high aristocracy, had been formed to transform the Catholic Netherlands into a federal republic to be united to the seven Northern Provinces.¹ But Berg and his followers knew well enough that without strong support from without they would be powerless.

Here, too, circumstances favoured them. The winter of 1631-2 saw the Spanish Netherlands girt round with foes. In Lorraine, the King of France in person dictated terms to his recalcitrant vassal, the Duke, the natural ally of Spain. The victorious troops of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden spent their Christmas Day at Mayence, after having overrun the whole of the Elector's territory. The Elector of Treves declared for the conqueror, and it seemed possible that unless help were given to the third ecclesiastical Elector at Cologne he would be forced into the same course. For many months Richelieu and Gustavus had been in alliance; and each was closely knit in a treaty with the Dutch.

All this favoured the conspirators, but their plot, to succeed, needed the active co-operation of the French and the Dutch. The negotiations with France

¹ Juste.

seem to have begun first. A common religion drew the Belgians to appeal to France, before they turned to their Calvinist neighbours. Throughout 1631, Richelieu had been planning the part which he was to play in the rebellion which seemed imminent. He began to think of reviving the ancient pretensions of France in the Netherlands; and it was about this time that the French historiographers, charged with investigating the matter, began to demonstrate the King's rights to the counties of Flanders and Artois.¹ Moreover, Richelieu had no wish to see the whole of the Netherlands united under the dominion of Holland as they might be, if the Dutch alone supported the rebellion of the Flemish nobles. He therefore eagerly awaited an opportunity to get into touch with the plotters.

With this Isabel herself supplied him. At this time she was harbouring in Brussels, Marie de' Medici, the Queen-Mother, who had fled from the French court. Anxious to reconcile Marie and the King, her son, Isabel, in August 1631, despatched as ambassador to France, Carondelet, the dean of Cambrai. He is said to have borne the Spanish government a grudge, because he had been refused the bishopric of Saint Omer.² Perhaps his was a mercenary or a weak nature. At any rate, he soon became the creature of Richelieu; he promised to foment rebellion, and began to act as the intermediary of Richelieu and the Flemish nobility.³

How many of the native population were involved it was never possible to discover. Aytona wrote to Philip IV. that Berg's followers were numerous but

¹ Waddington, p. 149 *seq.*

² Juste.

³ Waddington.

not declared. It is certain, however, that the movers in the revolution were almost exclusively Walloon nobles and officials. The danger of their disaffection lay in their high positions, their wealth, and the offices which they held. The Prince of Barbançon was a Knight of the Golden Fleece; the Count of Egmont, a Knight and a Grandee of Spain; the Prince of Epinoy, a member of the Council of State; the Duke of Bournonville, besides being a Knight of the Golden Fleece, was Governor of Lille, Douai and Orchies. Other conspirators were the governors of the frontier towns of Hainault, close to France, of Bouchain, Avesnes, Le Quesnoy, Mariembourg and Philippeville. Several of the burgomasters of Flanders and Artois also allowed themselves to be seduced by French gold.

Of Berg's allies among the Flemings, the most active was René de Renesse, the Count of Warfusée, one of the heads of the Council of Finances. Many years before, he had recommended himself to the government by the skill with which he had contrived to increase the annual rent drawn from the royal demesne.¹ A man of great ambition and exceptionally extravagant habits, he was ruined by debt, and sought in a revolution to retrieve his shattered fortune. The negotiations of Berg and his confederates were carried out with extraordinary secrecy; but there seems no room for doubt that, in April 1632, Warfusée was at the Hague, in conference with Frederick Henry of Orange and the French ambassador de Baugy.

There a very complete partition of the Southern Netherlands was arranged.² The conspirators under-

¹ Brussels Archives, xv., Infanta, Feb. 21st, 1624.

² Gachard, "Berg," in *Biographie nationale de Belgique*.

took, with the help of the United Provinces and France, to raise the greater part of the Netherlands against Spain. The discontent roused by the incapacity of the government, since the departure of Spinola, would, they thought, provide them with a strong following. The Spaniards once driven out, the northern provinces of the Spanish Netherlands—the duchy of Brabant with the lordship of Malines, the county of Flanders, the duchy of Gueldres, and the duchy of Limburg—were to be annexed to the United Provinces, retaining, however, their religion and their privileges.

The Prince of Orange was to be governor, captain and admiral-general of the Union, of which the Estates-General were to be held at the Hague. A close, perpetual alliance would be contracted between the new union and the King of France, against the house of Spain and Austria. As for the remaining provinces of the southern Netherlands (the duchy of Luxemburg, the counties of Artois, Hainault and Namur, with Lille, Douai and Orchies, and Cambrai and the Cambrésis), they were to fall to France.

Further, the rewards demanded by the conspirators were hardly as modest or impersonal as became good patriots. Berg asked to be a marshal of France, and governor of Luxemburg. Besides certain properties in Namur and Hainault for himself and his family, he demanded a large sum in ready money, a pension for life, with reversion to his wife, and various other rights in forests and salt-pits. Warfusée's demands were hardly less exorbitant. Richelieu, for his share, was to have the land of Le Quesnoy in Hainault with its dependencies, which would have brought

him in a revenue of at least 100,000 francs a year.

These negotiations complete, the Prince of Orange prepared for war. Money was sent to Venloo in Upper Gueldres, whither Warfusée had gone to communicate with Berg; and in May the Dutch army assembled at Nimeguen. It met with no opposition from the Spanish generals. Cordova had been sent to aid the ecclesiastical Electors on the Rhine, and Santa Cruz was too weak to offer any resistance. In rapid succession Frederick Henry took Venloo and Roermond, and ascending the Meuse, encamped before Maestricht, of which the great stone bridge formed one of the chief crossings of the river, on June 10th, 1632. Berg had refused to yield the places, still hoping to conceal his complicity, but he retired to Liège, and his inactivity seconded the efforts of the Dutch. The Infanta, knowing of his guilt, but anxious above all to recall him to her service, wrote with her own hand a conciliatory letter, promising him satisfaction if he would return to his allegiance.

Berg's answer was a manifesto, addressed to the provincial estates, explaining the cause of his disgrace and justifying his retreat. In his capacity of "*mestre de camp général*," he called to his service at Liège all officers and men, except those of the Spanish nation, urging them to help him "to deliver the country from these vipers who are poisoning it, and to purge it of these leeches who by their evil government are draining the life-blood of the poor people."¹ (June 18th). At the same time Berg despatched to the Infanta a strong indictment of the Spanish ministers, accusing them of

¹ Juste.

excluding the native nobility and oppressing the native population. He declared that by wilfully continuing the war, the government had completed the ruin of the southern provinces, and the triumph of their enemies of the north. After setting forth his own grievances, he urged that the Spaniards be made to quit the country and the government left to the Infanta. This last suggestion was pure hypocrisy. For though it was not known at that time, Berg's agreement with Orange and Richelieu established that the Infanta was to be forced to retire, after all the Spanish ministers had been seized. But he, no longer making any secret of his understanding with the United Provinces, published a letter from Orange dated from before Maestricht, promising him help "for the common good."

The Infanta's action was swift and decided. Within a week she had sent Berg's letter and his manifesto to the provincial estates, accompanying them by an appeal, which was at once an indictment of the traitor and an apology for the administration of which she was the head. She declared her firm belief in the fidelity of the provinces to the Crown of Spain and their attachment to the Catholic religion ; and urged them not to be led astray by the specious but false promises of Berg (June 25).

The effect of the Infanta's appeal was instantaneous. Not a single regiment, not a single company, answered Berg's call to arms. All the corporate bodies of the states answered Isabel's letter, expressing their indignation at Berg's conduct ; and renewed their oath of fidelity to the Governess and to the King of Spain. Liège, which Berg hoped to make the headquarters of revolt, refused to admit any soldiers into the city. Isabel

protested to the governing bodies that the residence in their midst of a man who was fomenting rebellion was incompatible with their declared neutrality. The city of Liège, thereupon, refused to harbour Berg any longer. He fled to Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence to Montfort in Gueldres, whence he issued a fresh justification of his actions, full of invectives against his enemies. Finally, he was well received at the Hague; and shortly afterwards took service with the Dutch, accepting an important command in their army, and the possession of the Marquisate of Bergen-op-Zoom.¹

With his flight, Berg's participation in the revolution, in which he had hoped to play so conspicuous a rôle, came to an end. He had failed to rouse either the native soldiery or the people. The responsibility for the apathy of the populace has been laid at the door of the Jesuits. The Netherlands, it is said, crushed by the rule of priests, had no spirit to resent the evils which they suffered under an alien government. No doubt the influence of the Jesuits was strong, both in the army and among laymen. But more potent to restrain men from rising in revolt was the obvious selfishness and cupidity of those who offered themselves as their leaders. With a flashing eye, fine features, and a splendid person, Berg was a figure to strike the popular imagination. But he was haughty, irritable and quarrelsome, with absolutely unbridled passions,² and an insatiable thirst for power. It was seen only too clearly that wounded vanity, and no love of his countrymen, had been his incentive. Moreover, if the yoke of Spain was heavy, was it probable that

¹ Biographie Nationale.

² Charges of nameless vices were brought against him.



COUNT HENRY VAN DEN BERG
VAN DVCK

From the engraving, by Pontius, in the British Museum

the yoke of Holland or of France would prove lighter? Old men there were who could remember the sufferings of Flanders at the hands of Alençon, the heir to the throne of France, whom she chose as her sovereign, in the days of her fiercest strife with Spain. As for the Dutch, they had, not long before, confessed to the Infanta how great was the hatred of Catholics in the Northern Provinces. If Gomarist and Arminian persecuted each other, what had the Romanist to hope from their rule?

Meanwhile, though Berg had fled and there was no movement among the populace, the Dutch army lay before Maestricht, and the nobility continued their intrigues with Richelieu, and offered to force the frontier towns to declare for Louis XIII.

Isabel summoned to Brussels the Knights of the Golden Fleece, of whom she suspected that many were involved; and they, thinking it the wiser course to await a more promising opportunity, protested their fidelity, and made their peace with the Governess. They hoped that in her present difficulties she would not dare to touch them. For the moment she was forced to accept their assurances. That she considered her position one of great danger is apparent from the step which she took. She determined to summon the Estates-General.

Before the Estates-General could meet, a further disaster had befallen the Netherlands. When Frederick Henry appeared before Maestricht, Isabel hastily recalled Cordova from Germany. His forces, acting with Santa Cruz, who came from Brabant, and Count Pappenheim, sent by the Emperor Ferdinand, were powerless against Orange's lines, and on August 22nd

the small garrison of Maestricht surrendered. A panic reigned in Brussels. The populace, following the Infanta's example, redoubled their prayers and processions to the shrines of the Sablon and of Laeken. A general voluntary contribution was raised to supply the immediate needs of the troops. But the army, reduced to a few thousand ill-fed and miserable men, was unable to check the triumphant advance of Orange, who, in a few weeks, crossed the Meuse and occupied the whole of the duchy of Limburg.

In these circumstances the Estates-General assembled in Brussels; and almost immediately came a manifesto from the Estates-General at the Hague, asking the Southern Netherlands to join with them in throwing off the Spanish yoke.¹ No doubt Berg and Warfusée had led the United Provinces to believe that in the assembly would be concentrated a feeling of resentment towards Spain. But the summons of the Estates-General had made a good impression on the country; and though they expressed dissatisfaction with regard to various abuses and demanded reforms, the Estates manifested in every circumstance their loyalty and fidelity to the Infanta. They, however, unanimously demanded the renewal of negotiations with the Dutch; and this request Isabel felt bound to grant. She hoped by this concession to inspire them with confidence and with a sense of their responsibility. It was an important resolution to take at a time when the victorious Prince of Orange was repulsing the overtures of her own agents, Rubens and Philip le Roy, and when the fidelity of the subjects of Spain seemed to be wavering.

¹ Juste.

From the first there was little hope that these negotiations with the Dutch would bear any fruit. Philip IV. had manifested extreme displeasure at the summons of the Estates-General, which the Infanta had caused to be convened without awaiting his instructions.¹ He regarded such assemblies as dangerous to the state, and wrote to the Infanta to suspend the meeting. But it was too late. Isabel replied that the Estates were showing themselves devoted, that she could not dissolve them, and that she had given them leave to negotiate with the United Provinces. This action seemed to the King the "first step towards the loss of the provinces." Completely distrusting the intentions of the Estates, and fearing their complicity with the Dutch, he determined to balk their negotiations. For this purpose he had an understanding with Peter Roose, the President of the Privy Council in the Netherlands. Unknown to the Infanta, he carried on private communications with Roose and encouraged him to sow dissensions between the Belgian and Dutch commissioners.

But even without this intrigue, there was little chance of an understanding. When the deputies met at Maestricht, the Dutch insisted that they would deal only with the Estates-General, "as estates to estates," and not with the King of Spain; and the Infanta, at Aytona's suggestion, granted the assembly authority to negotiate in their own name alone. Yet this did not prevent her from trying to accredit her own agent, Rubens, at the Hague, whither the conference had been transferred; an action which led to the withdrawal of the painter from diplomatic life, as

¹ Waddington, pp. 181 *seq.*

a result of his harsh treatment by the Duke of Arschot, the deputy of the Estates.

When it came to a proposal of terms, it became clear that the Dutch intended to make the peace with the Flemings a vehicle for the expulsion of the Spaniards. The Flemish deputies were asked to agree that the Spanish troops should quit the Netherlands, that the forts should be destroyed, and the maritime towns of Flanders defended by the Dutch and themselves conjointly. The Dutch on their side refused to yield any of their conquests, or to open the Scheldt for navigation. They asked for liberties for Protestants in Spanish territories, but made no mention of reciprocal advantages for Catholics in their provinces. To grant such terms would have been to destroy the dominion of Spain, and to submit themselves to the political and commercial supremacy of the Dutch. The Flemish deputies declared the terms exorbitant, and insisted that they only negotiated as "obedient and faithful subjects of his Majesty, with his approbation and consent, and without prejudice to his authority" (January 1633). Such language as this shows the misunderstanding between the two states, and the impossibility of an agreement. Yet so anxious were the Infanta and the southern estates to end the war with the Dutch that the negotiations continued for many months.

In the United Provinces the feeling for war was growing ever stronger. Frederick Henry reminded the Estates at the Hague that the Republic had been "fostered and strengthened in war." His greatest fear and their enemies' hope was that "the bond of union and concord may be broken by leisure (*cessante metu ab externo*) and that the Republic may fall again into the dissension

and discord in the matter of religion, administration, finance, and military organization . . . of which the Twelve Years' Truce is the living example." ¹

There was an external cause for the growing strength of the war-party. Richelieu was once more making use of the Dutch against Spain. His ambassador, Charnacé, as a diplomatist second only to Father Joseph, was at the Hague, using all his skill, to push the United Provinces into war; while he was himself still intriguing with the Flemish nobility. The Dutch issued an ultimatum of their terms, uncompromising as before—demanding to keep all their conquests, and that Breda and Gueldres should be restored to them, while they themselves refused the Spanish demand for the restoration of Pernambuco in Brazil. While the Flemish deputies retired to consider these terms, Charnacé succeeded in getting an army put into the field. Orange appeared on the Rhine, and, on June 3rd, captured Rheinberg, which had changed hands so often during the war. But in order to force the Dutch terms upon the Flemings, and to rouse the nobility to active co-operation, a more powerful military demonstration was necessary. And therein the Dutch failed, in spite of some success in Flanders. Aytona (though confessedly no soldier "except in spirit, by desire, and through some theoretic knowledge which my travels and occupations have brought me,") ² was able to defeat all Orange's plans; and the campaign ended in useless marches and counter-marches.

In spite of this interruption, which might have been construed into a complete rupture, Isabel encouraged the

¹ Waddington, pp. 194-5.

² Gachard, *Biographie Nationale* "Aytona."

Estates-General to continue in their negotiations. She strongly approved of the project of sending an agent to Spain to beg Philip IV. to renew the treaty-making powers granted to her in 1629 ; and a fortnight before her death the Duke of Arschot departed for Spain. But from first to last Philip disapproved of the confidence which Isabel placed in the Estates. He could not indeed view the suggestions of the Dutch with any feeling but horror. Had Spain yielded Pernambuco, and permitted the war in the New World to continue, as the Dutch proposed, she would have lost her colony of Brazil. To give up Breda and to leave Maestricht to the Dutch would be to put the Spanish Netherlands at their mercy. To recall the Spanish troops would be to acknowledge the emancipation of the obedient Provinces. Philip had a natural dislike of parliamentary assemblies. He declared them "pernicious at all times, and in all monarchical countries without exception."¹ He felt that to seek peace by their intervention was to expose himself to complete ruin. After the Infanta's death, there was no longer anyone to plead for the Estates-General ; and in July 1634 they were dissolved. With them vanished all hope of an agreement with the Dutch ; and though negotiations were for many years continued, at languid intervals, they bore no fruit, and the war between Holland and Belgium lasted until the settlement of Europe in 1648.

The summons of the Estates-General in 1632 proved to be not, as Philip IV. and Olivares and even Aytona feared, the ruin, but the salvation of the Spanish dominion. In 1634 Arschot declared that their convocation had destroyed the designs of the mutineers.

¹ Waddington, p. 182.

When open negotiations were begun with the Dutch, there was no longer even the possibility of justifying their own dealings. Still the intrigues with France continued, though by the end of 1632 there was probably little to be feared. Richelieu was not, at the moment, in a position to second the efforts of the nobility with any vigour. The flight of Gaston of Orleans, the King of France's brother, to the Netherlands had complicated affairs. The Cardinal was quite ready to help the revolt by underhand means, to shelter the fugitive nobles in France, and to supply them with money. But while he was subduing Orleans' allies within France and in Lorraine, while he strove to draw every possible advantage from Orleans' continual changes of front, he preferred to adopt a waiting attitude, and to content himself with his old policy of stirring up the Dutch. The time had not yet come for open war with Spain.

In 1633 Aytona felt himself strong enough to strike a blow. Of all the conspirators, the most implacable were Carondelet, the dean of Cambrai, and his brother George, the governor of Bouchain on the frontier. George Carondelet had, in the summer of 1632, admitted some French troops into his town, but losing his nerve at the lack of support in the country, he had hastily sent them back. The dean had crept back from France, where he had been negotiating with Richelieu, thinking himself safe. In April 1633 he was suddenly arrested. About the same time, Aytona descended upon Bouchain, and ordered the arrest of the Governor. Carondelet determined to be free or die. He sold his life dearly ; despatching with his own hand four of those who tried to seize him, before he was himself struck down.

While she lived, Isabel always pleaded for the gentlest measures; but a few weeks before her death came information which she could not neglect. What exactly was the part played by England in the conspiracy—whether Charles I., having plotted with the nobility, wilfully or inadvertently betrayed them; or whether the English ambassador at Madrid sold his master's secret to Spain—is not clear.¹ It seems, however, that Gerbier, at the time the English agent at the Hague, had himself pushed the plot against Spain, and had striven to throw the plotters into the arms of England.² Towards the end of 1633 he offered to reveal the plot; and, about a week before her death, Isabel resigned herself to paying a sum of 20,000 crowns, in exchange for details of the conspiracy, with the names of the nobles who had in any measure participated in it. This account was sent to Spain by a certain Capuchin, who hastened to outstrip the Duke of Arschot, the messenger whom the Estates-General had despatched to win the goodwill of Philip IV.

During the next year, Aytona felt the need of strong action. As a result of Gerbier's revelations, Arschot had been detained in Spain, in a state of semi-confinement. Sentence of death was passed against the fugitives Berg and Warfusée. An attempt was made to seize the nobles who had most compromised themselves; but with the exception of the Prince of Barbançon, they were warned and escaped to France. An amnesty was proclaimed shortly afterwards; but Barbançon was detained as a state prisoner for sixteen years, though apparently no sentence was pronounced against him;

¹ Juste. (The whole question appears to be shrouded in mystery.)

² Waddington, pp. 174 *seq.*

and the dean of Cambrai died a prisoner in Antwerp Castle.

Thus ended the conspiracy of the nobles, the last attempt to free the Netherlands from the dominion of Spain. But for the personal popularity of the Infanta, and the presence of Aytona, it might have assumed far more alarming proportions. But the conspiracy had not in it the elements of success. The leaders were actuated by self-interest, and found no support among the bulk of the people. Only with the strong co-operation of France and the United Provinces could the Spanish Government have been dislodged; and this co-operation was, for various reasons, not forthcoming.

The conspiracy naturally injured the Netherlands in the eyes of the Spanish ministers, and prepared the way for more autocratic government. Notwithstanding the alien influence in her councils, Isabel was regarded by the Flemings as an essentially national ruler. At her death, her people felt that they were to be submitted once more to the direct rule of a monarchy with which they were out of sympathy. The summoning of the Estates-General had given Philip IV. a shock which he was determined should not be repeated. After their dismissal in 1634, no Estates-General met in the Netherlands while the rule of Spain lasted; and thus the only vehicle which remained since the death of the Infanta for the expression of national demands, the chief guarantee against Spanish despotism, disappeared.

CHAPTER XVII

RICHELIEU AND MARIE DE' MEDICI: THE TASK ENDED

Covert hostilities between Spain and France—Richelieu's attempts to centralize France and crush the nobility—Isabel sees in them a weapon against France—Richelieu comes into conflict with the Queen-Mother and Monsieur—Isabel receives the Queen-Mother—Marie de' Medici's plans—Monsieur in Lorraine—Louis XIII. invades Lorraine—Monsieur flies to Brussels—Dissension between the courts of mother and son—Transformation of the court of Brussels—Plans for an attack on France—Execution of the Marshal de Marillac—Monsieur invades France—The defeat at Castelnaudary—Execution of Montmorency—Monsieur returns to Brussels—Isabel supports him—Increased dissension—Louis XIII. again invades Lorraine—Marguerite of Lorraine escapes to Brussels—Gaston begins to negotiate with Richelieu, while still plotting with Spain—Negotiations continuing at Isabel's death—Philip IV.'s brother Ferdinand to be Isabel's successor—Death of Isabel, December 1st, 1633—Effect of her reign—Conclusion

NOTHING is more characteristic of the relations of the European powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, than the long periods of covert hostilities, which preceded the declaration of war between them. For thirty years before the coming of the Armada, English and Spanish mariners had fought each other on the high seas. Elizabeth had lent substantial aid to the Dutch; one of her generals had been called to the leadership of Spain's rebellious provinces. Philip supported the plots aimed against

Elizabeth's life and throne. Yet nominally peace reigned between the two monarchies.

The same condition of affairs prefaced the great struggle between France and Spain in the seventeenth century. While Isabel lived, with the exception of two short campaigns in Italy, there was no declared war between France and the Habsburgs. Yet France was lending support to every enemy who attacked the House. In the Netherlands this French intervention had been particularly harmful. England, after the death of Elizabeth, had begun to fall out of the European struggle; and though English fighting-men still found their way to Holland, the Dutch relied more and more upon France to enable them to continue to offer resistance to the Spanish rulers of the Netherlands. As in earlier centuries France had used Scotland against England, so she was now using Holland against Spain. Until she was herself ready for the struggle, the Dutch must not be suffered to leave Isabel at peace in her territory.

There was a weapon which example might teach Isabel to use in retaliation upon France, should opportunity offer. Philip II., himself the aggressor against an apparently tottering French monarchy, had found an ally in the powerful, anti-monarchical, territorial nobility of France. So well had he used them that he had well-nigh laid the throne of France at his feet. From this fate Henry IV. had saved her; but there was still much to be done. "*Debellare superbos*" was Richelieu's object—to strike down the nobility, so that they should not dare to stand defiantly before the face of the King, or be held worthy allies by his foes outside France. The task which Richelieu set him-

self was vital to the interests of France. The vast administrative and military power of the nobility must come to an end. A disruptive and anarchical force, they had shown themselves incapable of patriotic feeling. Only as a united, centralized power could France stand, could she hope to play the great part in Europe for which Richelieu had destined her. The State must be the Monarchy.

It was naturally in the interests of Spain to delay as long as possible this consummation in France. Only when it was effected could the monarch, supreme at home, turn his mind to conquests abroad. The greater the embarrassments which met Richelieu in his task, the more remote the dangers with which he could threaten the Habsburg power. Since the Cardinal had acquired the chief authority in France, the work to which he had set himself had gone steadily forward. The Huguenots, whose organization made for decentralization, and had been used by the nobles in the civil wars of the sixteenth century, had been crushed and deprived of their political power, and remained only a harmless sect. In his struggle with the aristocracy, Richelieu found a greater quarry; he came face to face with Marie de' Medici, the Queen-Mother, and with Gaston of Orleans, the brother and heir-presumptive of the childless Louis XIII.

Marie de' Medici had at one time been Richelieu's patroness; but jealousy of his authority over the King, and partiality for her son Gaston, had made her his inveterate enemy. As for Gaston of Orleans—or "Monsieur," to give him his usual title—he but followed the almost unbroken tradition of conduct adopted by the heir to the throne in France, in stand-

ing in opposition to the Crown. He was a contemptible personage, formidable only because of his relationship to the King, and the readiness with which he allowed himself to be used as a figure-head for the plots of the nobility. Their military and administrative powers the Cardinal might destroy by legislation ; their plots still remained a danger. Already once they had striven to take his life, and to replace Louis XIII. by his brother, and one noble head had fallen on the scaffold.

Soon the Cardinal's foes perceived, as they thought, an opportunity to ruin him. In the autumn of 1630 Louis XIII. fell ill. Marie and her son Gaston hastened to his bedside ; and between lamentations and threats all but persuaded the sick man to discard his minister. But returning health gave Louis a clearer vision. He realized whither his mother and brother would lead him. On the Day of Dupes, as it was called, he had yielded to them. Now he determined to support Richelieu even against his family ; and the Cardinal was more strongly established than ever.

The vengeance of the triumphant minister fell upon his discomfited adversaries. It was clear that there was not room both for the Cardinal and for the Queen-Mother in France ; and Marie, with her son, fled. The report that she had an understanding with Spain and the Infanta in the Netherlands before she left France was assiduously spread by Richelieu, and considerably damaged Marie's cause. Her flight was blamed on all sides, and no movement was made in France in her favour. It appears, however, that Richelieu's report was false, and that the arrival of Marie at Mons in Hainault was really a surprise to Isabel.¹

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xxix., Infanta, Sept. 30th, 1631.

But she welcomed her gladly. Philip IV. would have preferred that the Queen-Mother should betake herself to Aix-la-Chapelle, outside the boundaries of Spanish territory; but he was persuaded by the Infanta to allow Marie to remain.

There was much to draw the two women together. Each had suffered sorrows, which she could hope that the sympathetic tears and the comforting words of an understanding companion might soften. Each had long outlived her husband, and had wielded high authority over a nation, in a position of isolation. Troubles which might threaten her sway were gathering thick about Isabel. Could she not feel for one who had been driven from power and from her country? Both women were fast approaching the age when they might need the support of a strong young arm. To whom could either turn? Isabel had no child, no near kinsman of whom she could demand assistance. Marie, brooding over the treatment which had been meted out to her by her son, in the exile to which she was condemned, might in the bitterness of her soul exclaim, that it had been better for her had she too been childless.

But it was not only the intimate feeling of personal sympathy which led Isabel to welcome the French Queen-Mother. Marie had always been a friend to Spain, and her regency had been a peaceful interlude between the active policies of Henry IV. and of Richelieu. Moreover, Isabel now had what she thought would prove a formidable weapon to wield against her enemy. For these reasons she very readily received the fugitive. In spite of her advancing age she met the Queen-Mother at Mons, and accompanied her to her

country-seat at Marimont, and to the "kermesse" at Antwerp; and on August 13th, 1631, Brussels accorded them an enthusiastic reception.¹

The Infanta had as yet no knowledge of the restless, intriguing spirit of the Queen-Mother. Scarcely was she in Brussels, than she prayed Isabel to help her to a reconciliation with the King of France. She can hardly have hoped for any result; for the King, under the guidance of the Cardinal, was at the time engaged in depriving of all property and office, and proscribing, those who adhered to her cause. Isabel did not wish for Marie's departure; but she sent an envoy, Carondelet, the dean of Cambrai, to France to offer her intervention in restoring peace between mother and son. This embassy, as has been seen, was very skilfully used by Richelieu for his own advantage, to facilitate his intrigues with the rebellious nobility of the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, plans for an attack upon France, set on foot by Marie, with Isabel's approval, went forward but languidly. For Marie had been persuaded to a new move; she would visit her daughter Henrietta Maria in England. Dismay and alarm filled the English court. Charles I. was immersed in his own difficulties, and had no wish to embroil himself with Spain. Although Monsieur was still in Lorraine, quarrels had already begun between his followers and those of his mother, accounts of which had reached England. Charles was anxious to keep at Brussels "the noyse and disorders of a French Court,"² and was not

¹ Pardoe, "Marie de' Medici," and Henne and Wauters, ii.

Record Office, "S.P. Flanders," vol. xx. Dorchester to Gerbier, Nov. 15th, 1631.

minded to welcome his troublesome mother-in-law. He was determined to play "no other part in their tragi-comedy, then the pacification of differences, which is the last act, and should be the best also." So keenly did Charles I. feel the danger of receiving so inconvenient a guest, that Gerbier, his agent at Brussels, was urged to exert all his efforts to prevent the visit; and was warned that his making or ruin depended on his execution of the mission. By the end of the year the danger was over. Gerbier was able to inform the anxious minister in London that the project of the voyage was "sound asleep." Yet he confessed that his efforts had been far less potent to restrain the Queen-Mother than "*c'este agreable Inconstance*,"¹ the deity whose dictates alone she obeyed. He declared himself eager to erect a statue to Inconstancy, to whom he owed his restored peace of mind.

It was the winter following on the disastrous campaign of Santa Cruz. Isabel's territories were surrounded by her enemies. Along the Rhine, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden was supreme. Within her provinces, discontent was rife, revolt was threatening. Her difficulties were not simplified by the arrival of Gaston of Orleans at her capital. Since his departure from France, Monsieur had been with his ally Duke Charles in Lorraine, where he was wooing Charles' sister Marguerite. The dowry was at least as attractive in Monsieur's eyes as the person of the lady. It was to be of great service in raising troops for an expedition against France. Monsieur's sojourn in Lorraine² was a menace to the royal authority, which

¹ Gerbier, Dec. 6th, 1631.

² The House of Lorraine was, on the female side, of royal and French descent, but its members were looked upon as foreigners in France. Their

Richelieu determined should no longer be suffered. He had moreover a suspicion of the marriage contemplated between Gaston and the Duke's sister. In December 1631, the King of France himself appeared at Metz at the head of an army.

The Duke, receiving no support, was forced to yield. He abjured for the future every alliance except that with France, and pledged himself not to harbour the King's enemies, especially not the Queen-Mother and her son; and Gaston was forced to take refuge in Brussels.

His arrival transformed Isabel's capital into a scene of riotous gaiety. Before she received the French fugitives, Isabel's court had been noted for its quiet and seclusion. The Governess' own recreations were few and simple. She no longer hunted; banquets and tourneys were things of the past. The hours not given to affairs of State or to meditation, were spent in working with the ladies of the court; in making decorations for the churches and clothes for the poor.¹ Isabel now rarely left her palace, except to perform some public duty, to follow one of the numerous processions which had lately been introduced, or to visit the sick. Like the queen-bee, said her subjects, she rarely went far from the hive. The hive was now transformed; and Brussels became, for a short time, the little Paris she has in our own time delighted to be. Monsieur was lodged in the royal palace, and became the centre of a court

possessions, lying on the borders of France, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Empire, made them the natural allies of the enemies of France. Moreover, Lorraine separated the Netherlands from Franche-Comté, the Spanish County of Burgundy; and thus the friendship of the Duke was essential to Isabel.

¹ Sieur de Saint-Germain, "Portrait en petit d'Isabelle-Claire-Eugenie."

composed mostly of the idle sycophants whom he had attracted to himself. Monsieur's was as coarse as well as a shallow nature. With his favourite, the Sieur de Puylaureus, who completely dominated him, he passed his days and nights in degraded and vicious pleasures. Marie, on the other hand, deferring in all matters to her confessor Chanteloupe, spent her time in framing indictments of Richelieu and petitions to the Parlement of Paris. Nor was it long before plots began to be hatched against the French minister. Between Gaston's followers and those of his mother there was continual dissension and struggling for supremacy, and Brussels rang with reports of their strife and violence.

Even such a creature as Monsieur seemed of value to the Infanta. His coming had given a definite form to her projects against France. Isabel appears to have been deceived as to the position of the Queen-Mother and Gaston in France. She declared her conviction that, once in the country, the exiles would be joined by numbers who were discontented with Richelieu.¹ The difficulty was to raise troops sufficient to seize some town on the frontier. It soon became evident that the flight of the Queen-Mother had deprived her of all support in France, and that even Richelieu's stern rule was preferred to a possible renewal of the strife which Marie's return with her son would bring. Monsieur basked in the sunshine of his Court, while his extravagant household was entirely supported by the Infanta. Negotiations with Spain went slowly. Marie was anxious that a Spanish garrison should be put into Sedan on the frontier, but the difficulties of his kinsman in Germany made Philip IV. loth to take

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xxix. Sept. 30th, 1631.

action which would bring him into direct conflict with France.

Suddenly came the news of the execution of the Marshal de Marillac, one of the Queen-Mother's adherents. Monsieur determined on immediate action. His only ally in France was the Duke of Montmorency, who was to raise Languedoc in his favour. Montmorency urged him to delay, as his arrangements were not yet complete. But Monsieur heeded him not. Languid when he should have been active, he was now hasty when he should have waited. Orange was descending on Maestricht, and Isabel could spare no troops. But she ordered 100,000 crowns to be paid to Monsieur, who then left Brussels, and, joined by the troops of Spain at Treves, pushed on into France. In Burgundy, through which he passed, not a man joined him, and Dijon closed its gates against him. Without support, the Duke of Montmorency was not strong enough to stand against the royal general, Schomberg; and on September 1st his forces were defeated near Castelnaudary. Monsieur behaved with his customary cynical disregard for the dictates of honour. He abandoned the wounded on the field, and in three days had come to terms with his brother. He sacrificed his friends, renounced his mother's cause, and promised to discontinue his relations with Spain and with Lorraine. One effort he did make to save the life of the Duke of Montmorency. But he was doomed; for Richelieu could not afford to spare so powerful an opponent, or to lose the opportunity of making so impressive an example. The last male scion of the greatest noble house in France ended his days on the scaffold.¹

¹ One of those who begged in vain for Montmorency's life was his sister, the Princess of Condé, the heroine of Henry IV.'s last amorous intrigue.

It was quite patent to all that the promise drawn from Orleans by fear for his own person was valueless when he was no longer in danger. At the end of the year he was again in Brussels, and his intrigues with Spain went as merrily as ever. His return to Brussels was the signal for a fresh outburst of riot and excess. Marie was disgusted with Gaston's treachery to her cause, and withdrew to Ghent, refusing to see him, in spite of Isabel's entreaties that she would hear her son first in his own defence. The rivalry between the two courts after Monsieur's return waxed fast and furious. Isabel must have realized how untrustworthy an ally was Monsieur. Yet she endured the coarse wrangling of his court; and while she was protesting her exhaustion to Spain, paid him 30,000 crowns a month for its upkeep. So convinced was she that he might still be used as a check on France.

After the failure of Gaston's expedition, the King of Spain proposed to form a league with the Emperor, the Catholic Electors and the Duke of Lorraine, to further the exiles' cause by force. But Monsieur was beginning to lose all interest in the plans made on his behalf. While he was still intriguing in Brussels, Madrid and Nancy, he began to allow his followers to open negotiations with Richelieu. He knew that his marriage with Marguerite of Lorraine had given offence, but he now determined to make it public and to send for his wife to Brussels. This was the opportunity for which Richelieu had been waiting, to strike a final blow at Lorraine. While theologians put their wits together to prove the marriage illegal—because it had been contracted by the heir to the throne without the consent of the King, his natural guardian—a French army in-

vaded Lorraine and laid siege to Nancy. The Duke, finding himself helpless, consented to deliver to Louis both his capital and his sister. But the King had now to encounter a stronger force than either Duke Charles or his brother-in-law. The Duchess Marguerite refused to be delivered to the King. Disguised as a man (*"ou plutôt en ange, tant elle était belle,"* according to the gallant Frenchman who relates her adventure),¹ her face "smirched with umber," she escaped through the French lines, accompanied by three of her gentlemen. In this guise she rode in two days over the frontier of her brother's duchy to Thionville in Luxemburg, where she secretly revealed herself to the wife of Isabel's governor. Perhaps there was still danger of pursuit, perhaps the Duchess enjoyed the masquerade and was loth to abandon it. At any rate, from being a man she became a chambermaid, and in this new disguise accomplished her journey across Luxemburg. Isabel made her right welcome in the capital; and the ministers bestowed on Monsieur a further grant of 15,000 florins a month for the maintenance of his wife's household.

But the time had passed when Isabel could hope to wage war upon France through the Duke of Orleans, or to profit by the Queen-Mother's residence in the Netherlands. The negotiations for a league of Catholic princes who were to intervene in arms in France went languidly forward; but nothing was accomplished. Lorraine, who was to be the chief sinew of the undertaking, was completely under the dominion of France. Though the league was essentially for the advantage of Marie and Monsieur, so untrustworthy

¹ Waddington, p. 171, quoting "*Mémoires de Beauvau.*"

were both that it was impossible to communicate any schemes to them, for fear that all would be revealed.¹

Richelieu was anxious to procure the departure of Marie and of Gaston from the Netherlands. Since Montmorency was dead and Lorraine's power broken, Monsieur was far less dangerous in France than in the territory of her enemies. For Marie's return he was not so anxious, but only for her departure from Spanish territory. She had shown herself uncompromising; she had plotted against his life. She was determined to be reconciled only at Richelieu's expense. Finally, she realized her mistake, but it was too late to make her peace. Moreover, the Oratorian Chanteloupe, her adviser and confidant, who drew a large monthly pension while she remained in Spanish dominions, was unwilling to yield this source of income, and urged upon her the impossibility of returning to France.² Nothing could have been more helpful to Richelieu's plans than the quarrels of Marie and her son Gaston. He was able to widen the breach between them, while he negotiated with each separately. It was obvious that the end was not far off. Monsieur was finding out what terms he could get from the minister, which party would feather his nest most cosily. His tergiversations were not yet at an end, when Isabel died. But during the year following her death he abandoned his courageous wife, with whom his marriage was declared null and void, returned to France, and was reconciled to his brother. Isabel's successor, Aytona, had long ago expressed himself disgusted with the conduct of the French court. He had no desire to stay the parting guest. Marie remained for some

¹ Brussels Archives, Nov. 12th, 1633.

² Waddington, pp. 170 *seq.*

years in the Netherlands ; but after Isabel's death, no ruler regarded her with favour. In 1638 she was forced to depart, and the last years of her life were spent in wanderings in many countries in search of an asylum.

With Monsieur in France, Richelieu held himself secure from any danger from the Netherlands. Gaston and his noble faction were, at any rate, for a time, crushed. Free from embarrassments within France, Richelieu was ready to turn his whole force against the external foe. In 1635 France took her place as the chief actor in the Thirty Years' War ; Richelieu became the arbiter of Europe.

Isabel did not live to see that day, the destruction of all her hopes. A month before her death came the certain knowledge that Monsieur was playing her false. She had realized that he was weak and shifting ; and had tried to rid herself of Puylaurens, to whose evil influence she ascribed Gaston's faults, and whom she knew to be in communication with France. She was thoroughly weary of her guests. In vain she had urged upon them the necessity for united action, if all their schemes were not to be baffled by Richelieu. Finally, their dissensions had worn out even her hospitality. When her own needs were great, she had defrayed their expenses. Though infirm herself, she had visited Marie, when she lay ill at Ghent ; she had urged Richelieu to concede that Marie's own physician from Paris might attend her. Her kindness had been abused ; and she confessed that should the King of France demand the resignation of his mother and brother to his authority, she would not be loth to comply.¹

¹ Brussels Archives, vol. xxxii., Nov. 13th, 1633.

Her endurance was not submitted to a further test, for she was fast approaching her end. Eighteen months earlier, in the midst of the troubles brought upon her by the conspiracy of the nobles, feeling her enfeebled health unequal to the strain of government, she had urged Philip IV. to hasten the coming of the Infant Ferdinand, his brother, long her destined successor. Her request was met by the customary Spanish delays, and to the end of her life she bore the cares of her state alone. Provision had been made for the carrying on of the government of the Netherlands after Isabel's death, in the event of Ferdinand's arrival being still further postponed. Six interim governors, chosen from among the highest provincial commanders and the nobility, had been appointed. But this arrangement was found unworkable; and soon after Isabel's death Aytona was appointed lieutenant-governor and captain-general, a position which he held successfully until the arrival of the Infant Ferdinand in 1635.

In the night between November 30th and December 1st, 1633, Isabel died. Feeling her end near, "she recommended to the Divine Providence the preservation of these Provinces and People, and to the Marquis d'Aytona (during his vice-regency) to use the said People gently, the lesson wth the Emperor Charles the Fifth had given to her Father, knowing this People's disposition, and she spake wth that wisdom and smiling countenance as she was wont, and wth that temper as if no disease did oppress her."¹ In the presence of death, many difficulties vanished, quarrels and heart-burnings were forgotten. Marie de' Medici and her

¹ Record Office, vol. xxiii., December 2nd, 1633. Gerbier, agent in Brussels.



FRANCIS DE MONCADA, MARQUIS OF AYTON

VAN DYCK

From an engraving in the British Museum

son were brought together at Isabel's bedside, and for the moment the bitter wrath in their hearts was stilled by the gentle calm of the Infanta's dying benediction. No close ties of life-long affection bound Isabel to Marie, and their short friendship had received many a rude shock. But now, at the end of her days, no dearer friend was at her side, and it was in Marie de' Medici's arms that Isabel breathed her last.

On the day following her death, the Infanta was buried in the chapel of the court. No splendid funeral rites accompanied the last journey of her who, in her lifetime, had set such great store by the magnificence of religious ceremonial. It had been Isabel's wish that her burial should be conducted with the same solemn pomp which had signalized her husband's funeral. But dearly as her subjects loved her, it was not in their power to fulfil her last desire. The utmost penury reigned in the Netherlands. Even the people of Brussels, though they regarded the Infanta with an affection which they bestowed on few of their rulers, felt that financial ruin would overwhelm them, should they attempt again a procession, as splendid as that which had marked the Archduke's funeral. The remains of the Infanta therefore rested for many years in the court chapel, until in 1650, they were transferred by the Archduke Leopold, the Governor, to the Cathedral of Sainte Gudule, where Albert lay. There in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament, a simple marble slab now indicates the resting-place of the Archdukes, the Sovereigns of the Netherlands.

Controversy has not been still with regard to the effect of the Archdukes' reign on the Netherlands. It has been urged that the misfortunes of Flanders,

the humiliations which she endured for two centuries, were due largely to the tyranny of the priests, who were introduced in vast numbers during their reign. It must be admitted that the charge of burdening the country with religious foundations is to some extent justified. Nor can it be denied that the Infanta, in this respect, in no way departed from the course followed by her husband. She had all her life been a friend of monks and priests, and she had great faith in their power for good. From Spain and Italy they flocked to her side, and Isabel became the nursing mother of religious institutions. In 1623, shortly after she had dedicated herself to the rule of Saint Francis, a "retreat of forty hours" was organized in the royal chapel at the instigation of a certain Hyacinthe Casali, a Capuchin sent from Rome, for the happiness and prosperity of the country. A splendid mystic ceremony inaugurated the proceedings, in which the Capuchin, in the presence of all the civic and religious orders, delivered himself of a dramatic sermon, swaying and lashing his body, and calling in anguished tones on the name of the Infanta. But such mummery, unsuited to the Flemish nature, disgusted clergy and laity alike, and never obtained any hold on the country.

Nevertheless, many ceremonies, hitherto unknown in the Netherlands, were transplanted from Rome. Processions to shrines and holy places were introduced, more especially in troublous times, when it was said that the children, from force of habit, chanted litanies as they walked through the streets. Religious foundations sprang up in every town, and the burden of supporting them was shared by the Infanta and the civic authorities. Jesuits, Benedictines, Minorites and

Carmelites obtained positions at the universities of Louvain and Douai, and were established in schools throughout the country. In this way they were able to secure a complete hold over the minds of the Flemings, who soon developed an attachment for their masters. So that, a century and a half later, when the Emperor Joseph attempted to check the despotism of the clergy, to which the enervation of the Flemings appeared to be due, he was met by the resistance of the majority of the people.

But heavy as was the burden of the religious foundations, and grave as the danger doubtless was which threatened a country oppressed by priestly rule, the poverty and exhaustion of the Netherlands were due to causes anterior to the Infanta's reign, which she had herself striven to combat. The Archdukes inherited a war which, on their accession, had been in progress for more than thirty years. The Twelve Years' Truce, brought about by their efforts, gave to the exhausted states a much needed time of rest. This period of recovery and of growing prosperity the Infanta strained every nerve to extend. At no time during the last twelve years of her reign did she renounce the hope of securing peace. That her efforts were unsuccessful was due to a number of external causes—to Philip IV.'s obstinate disregard of her advice, to the internal difficulties of the United Provinces, which the Dutch hoped to allay by a foreign war, and finally, to the machinations of Cardinal Richelieu.

The prosperity of the Netherlands, as Isabel came to understand only too well, but which the government of Spain appears never to have realized, depended on the development of her commerce by trade overseas. The

period of the glory of the great manufacturing towns of Flanders, of Ghent, of Ypres and Bruges was passed, before the Netherlands fell under the Spanish dominion. They had sunk beneath the weight of their disputes with the Dukes of Burgundy of the fifteenth century, and their struggles against the rising English cloth manufacturers. But, under favourable conditions, the reign of the Archdukes should have witnessed the restoration of Flanders to her former lofty position. The seventeenth century was essentially the period of commercial expansion by means of overseas trade. For this expansion Flanders seemed eminently ready. Her geographical position was favourable, and, at the beginning of the century, Antwerp, her greatest city, was the mart of the world. A great future might have been predicted for the Southern Netherlands, in spite of their misfortunes, could the war once be brought to an end. But all was lost when, in the making of peace, the mouth of the Scheldt was left in the hands of the Dutch, and Antwerp ceased to be accessible by the river. In vain did Isabel strive to remove this great check on the development of the Provinces. The Dutch held the Scheldt, and Antwerp ceased to be a world-mart. To this cause, more than to any other, was due the sorry part which Belgium played among the growing commercial nations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Against the difficulties which, as the years went by, encompassed her ever more closely, Isabel fought with crippled strength. Her financial resources were never adequate to her needs. Extravagant she may have been in some respects. But it is doubtful whether, by the exercise of every economical device,

the Infanta could have escaped any considerable part of the burden of debt which more and more overwhelmed her. Spain was too exhausted to produce the means for the execution of the designs of Spanish rulers. Practically at no time were the needs of the Government of the Netherlands punctually supplied. Penury was the source of Isabel's greatest troubles—the constant mutinies of the troops, the quarrels with the Estates and with the capital. She was most loth to demand money from her subjects, when they had already given lavish help; she well knew that the relief afforded by supplies extorted against the will of a people is usually outweighed by the troubles which spring from the ill-will created between ruler and subjects. Yet what was she to do, when her most urgent appeals to Spain met with no response, and when her soldiers went starving and half-naked into the field?

Under the stress of the burden of affairs, the Infanta's rule of life grew ever more rigorous. Her industry and her sense of duty led her to lay aside all pleasures, that the needs of her people might be attended to. She denied herself the enjoyment of hunting, of which she was passionately fond, and Binche and Marimont welcomed her but seldom. The gayer court festivals and tourneys disappeared, and the park and hunting-lodge of Tervueren, formerly the scene of many a splendid gathering, were silent and deserted. Day by day the same stern round was followed, the same hours were devoted to public affairs, to work for the poor and for the churches—now Isabel's sole relaxation—to prayer and meditation. Even the hours of rest were often broken, if the work of examining and commenting on the

multitude of papers relating to her state had not been completed at the end of the day.

It was not only devotion to work which led Isabel to relinquish her pleasures, but a growing taste for retirement and solitude. Side by side in her nature, with the keen enjoyment of life—the love of gaieties, of feasts and sport, inherited perhaps from some Burgundian or French ancestor—was a strain of mysticism, intensified from generation to generation in the Spanish house of Habsburg. This strain in Isabel's character naturally deepened with increasing age, and led her, as it had led so many of her line, to seek for rest and spiritual comfort, by withdrawing from the world. She found it in the forest of Soignes, on the outskirts of Brussels, at the gates of a Capuchin convent which she had established there, at half a league's distance from Tervueren. At this spot stood a little chapel, for the Infanta's devotions, and close to it, a narrow cell. There, reclining on a Capuchin's pallet, her mattress made of reeds, her head pillowed on a block of wood, Isabel spent many an hour in prayer and meditation, finding there relief from the sorrows of her life. During these hours of solitude she prepared herself for death; and when it came, she was ready. To her servants, who stood about her weeping, she spoke at the last, smiling serenely; mildly wondering that they should regret what was to her such a welcome call to rest.

Yet through all her mystical devotions, Isabel retained, to the end of her life, her powers of action. In the seclusion of her cell doubts and difficulties might assail her, but when face to face with a danger, her mind was no longer "sicklied o'er with

the pale cast of thought." Strong and resolute she showed herself in dealing with the conspiracy of the nobility in the very year before her death. Braving the displeasure of the King of Spain, Isabel, on her own initiative, adopted a swift and vigorous course of action, which dealt an immediate and fatal blow to the powers of revolt.

Though Isabel's capacity for dealing with worldly affairs may have suffered but slightly from the monastic bent which swayed her mind, regarded in another aspect it was perhaps more harmful. The nobility of the Netherlands were a gay and pleasure-loving race, who, except when roused, troubled themselves little with questions of religion or of government. Their nature demanded continual entertainment in splendid feasts, in jousts and revels. They were perfectly contented to live in the midst of a brilliant court, where their sense of dignity was gratified by the holding of honourable positions about the person of their Prince. But in the absence of such a centre of luxurious enjoyment, the Flemish nobility grew restive. The lack of a splendid court had been not the least among the causes of the difficulties of the reign of Philip II.; and this Philip's advisers had sought to remove, by establishing Albert and Isabel in Brussels. But the peaceful, almost monastic seclusion of the court during the last years of the Infanta's life, and the reductions which she had made in her household, left the nobility without occupation, without entertainment, and in consequence discontented. They were thus in a frame of mind to resent any grievance; and, once more turning their attention to the conditions of the government, they were not slow

in discovering real causes for profound dissatisfaction.

Notwithstanding the troubles which so frequently beset it, the Netherlanders have always regarded the rule of Isabel as one of the few bright passages in their sad history. It formed an interlude between the terrible sufferings of Philip II.'s reign, and the long, dreary period of the eighteenth century, when Belgium became the prey of many masters and the battle-field of the Powers of Europe. While Isabel lived, the Flemings had over them a national ruler who understood their needs, and sympathized with their aspirations. She opposed the most arbitrary measures of the ministers sent to her from Spain, urging them in all matters to employ gentle means—using constantly her favourite phrase *con blanduras*. She intervened on behalf of the Flemings with Philip IV., defending them from his accusations, insisting that they were free, spirited men, who would not brook harsh, despotic treatment. Isabel had come to the Netherlands with no knowledge of her new subjects; but during the course of years, as she lived in their midst and took part in their national life, she acquired a deep understanding of their nature, and their joys and their sorrows became also hers. The loneliness of her private life led her the more readily to lavish her personal care and sympathy on her people.

Had Isabel's advice been followed, had her suggestions, and those of her ministers, Spinola and Aytona, not been so persistently disregarded, many of the misfortunes of her reign might have been avoided; and Spain might even have won back the regard

of the Netherlands which the policy of Philip II. had forfeited. But there was one great lesson which Spanish kings and ministers never learned, through all the tribulations which overtook them in ruling this great province of their empire. They were masters of dominions scattered far asunder, of peoples differing widely from themselves in race, traditions and their manner of life. Yet they could not bring themselves to trust their viceroys, the men who spoke with the knowledge born of experience, with an intimate understanding of the people whom they were sent to rule, such as those at a distance could not hope to acquire. For the traveller from Madrid in the seventeenth century, the Netherlands lay as distant as is the Indian Ocean from England to-day; even, in times of hostility with France, as distant as the great islands of the Pacific. Yet Spain allowed her Governors in the Netherlands little latitude in their actions; their advice and their demands were neglected; their measures were rendered ineffective or reversed by an ignorant, hide-bound central Government. No warnings of the dangers ahead of them, should they persist in their course, served to check the rulers of Spain; and thus one of the greatest provinces of the Spanish Empire was first shattered, and then altogether lost.

Philip IV. followed in the footsteps of his fathers, and in so doing for ever alienated his subjects in the Netherlands. But the affection which they withheld from the Kings of Spain, the Flemings lavished on Isabel, as they had lavished it on the Emperor Charles V. One of the greatest Flemish men of letters, Justus Lipsius, living in the days of her rule, gave voice to his regard for her in a discourse, wherein he main-

tained that *les grands Estats ne doivent point reietter le gouvernement des braves femmes*. The Netherlanders have always cherished the memory of Isabel as a good and brave woman, and as one of the most beneficent of their rulers. Though they could not raise a monument in stone for her, she is enshrined for ever in their hearts.

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